

Hafa Adai!

Yulang, Kaito, Tolentino are top winners in MVA essay tilt. **PAGE 6**
MANGO membership doubles in eight months. **PAGE 8**

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Saipan Tribune



MISS EARTH CONTESTANTS

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang and reigning Miss Northern Marianas Earth Maria Lael Terlaje are joined by this year's Miss Northern Marianas Earth contestants during a pinning ceremony at the Saipan Mayor's Office conference room. This year's eight contestants are Sue Ann Huerbo, Macey Fujihara, Megan Hemley, Tania Borja, Fiona Crystal Rio, Stephanie Borja, Bianca Joy Zapanta, and Rain Justine Kirby.

JOSHUA SANTOS

Story on
Page 3

No LibDay festivities this year

Plans to hold a full-blown traditional Liberation Day celebration in the CNMI this July 4 has been scuttled, mainly because the COVID-19 pandemic still a threat to public health. There will still be a fireworks display though, on July 4, at the Garapan Fishing Base.

In a statement from the Saipan Mayor's Office, it said there will be no government-sponsored Liberation Day activities this year because of COVID-19.

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang believes it will be in the best interest of the public to forego the traditional

celebration this year. "While many are encouraging us to go forward with a shortened version of our traditional week-

long festival heading into the Fourth of July, we think keeping our public's safety from

See LIBDAY on Page 4

energy project because solar

panels are getting more and more expensive, considering the trillions of dollars of federal funds flowing and the push to get so many jurisdictions on

solar power panels.

At the CUC board of directors' special meeting yesterday, Tiberius Mocanu told the board that in order for PSS get

See PSS on Page 4

last Tuesday's budget hearing, has gone on medical leave. This means a House Ways and Means Committee plan to resume its budget hearing today, Friday, will not push through.

Committee chair Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) told *Saipan Tribune* that Guerrero called him up yesterday morning to inform him that he

See DPS on Page 4

Together we can
restore trust in traveling
to the Marianas

TOGETHER, WE CAN

By MIKE SABLAM
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Mike Sablan is vice president of Triple J Enterprises, Inc. and chairperson of the Domestic Policy and Recovery Committee of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers. As an advisory council for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, the GCEA's mission is to improve the quality of life in the Marianas for all residents.



This has been a positively eventful week for the Marianas. The Governor's Council of Economic Advisers thanks Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, and the entire 22nd Commonwealth Legislature for their valuable support in enacting Public Law 22-01 establishing the Commonwealth Eco-

See TOGETHER on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 7:05pm, June 10, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population: **57.7%**
Fully Vaccinated: **57.7%**

Pfizer/BioNTech			
Initiated:	23,120	Completed:	20,769
Fully Vaccinated:	20,769	Completed:	20,769
Moderna			
Initiated:	3,979	Completed:	3,358
Fully Vaccinated:	3,358	Completed:	3,358
Janssen			
Fully vaccinated:	331	Completed:	331

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	8,224	6	8,230
Recovered	8,029	1	8,030
Active	55	6	61
Deaths	139	0	139
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			169,893

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	183	0	183
Traced via Travel Screening	147	0	147
Traced via Community Screening	36	0	36
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			79

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

INSIDE



LOCAL

A project to install traffic lights at the Beach Road and Quartermaster corner breaks ground.

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BUSINESS

United Visa cardmembers who donate to LGBTQ+ organizations will be rewarded.

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OFF THE WALL

China's wandering elephants are fast becoming international stars.

PAGE 18



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Local

FOR BEACH ROAD AND QUARTERMASTER INTERSECTION

Traffic light project breaks ground



Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, seventh from left, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider, House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez, Department of Public Works Secretary James A. Ada, other members of the Legislature, and DPW staff break ground on a streetlight project across the Beach Road and Quartermaster Road intersection yesterday morning. JOSHUA SANTOS

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

ished in about seven months.

The project's contractor, USA Fanter Corp. Ltd., received its notice to proceed on the project on June 1. The \$1,945,638 project has a completion date of January 26, 2022, and is fully funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration.

spoke of the project's role in improving the driving experience that Beach Road offers to many in the community and tourists alike.

"We can see that [the Beach and Quartermaster intersection] is a busy place for motorists and a hotspot for accidents. This is a... much-needed project," said [redacted]

Villagomez. Next up will be a ground-breaking ceremony for an improvement project along Route 36, improving the span of road from Kingfisher to Bird Island in Talofofa.

In an interview with Torres, he explained that these recent burst in infrastructure projects have actually been in the works for quite some time and have only come to fruition after undergoing

"A lot of these projects are not just [the product of] a year's work. There's quite a long, lengthy process. ... Department of Public Works and other agencies have been working really hard, and now you're seeing all this hard work that's been happen-

House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan)

Miss Northern Marianas Earth holds sash-pinning

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A ceremony making official the eight contestants for the upcoming 2021 Miss Northern Marianas Earth was held yesterday afternoon at the Saipan Mayor's Office conference room. Vying for this year's Miss Northern Marianas Earth are Sue Ann Huerbo, Macey Fujihara, Megan Hemley, Tania Borja, Fiona Crystal Rio, Stephanie Borja, Bianca Joy Zapanta, and Rain Justice Kirby.

The eight each spoke about their environmental advocacies and why.

Huerbo advocates for going green, because it will "reduce pollution and environmental toxins." She also hopes to educate the people of the CNMI and future generations to take better care of the Earth.

Fujihara advocates for encouraging more sustainable packaging, saying she "wants to help reduce plastic waste and encourage a more eco-friendly lifestyle."

Hemley advocates for green building practices and wants to promote eco-friendly and

sustainable living.

Tania Borja advocates for assisting and encouraging the community to preserve and beautify the environment. She said she joined the pageant to "expand my knowledge about the environment and to gain an experience that will aid me in striving for a better and brighter future."

Rio advocates for pollution education, saying she "wants to educate the community on the different types of pollution that affect our environment" and encourages collaboration "to find different ways to get rid of them."

Stephanie Borja gave a speech on what her advocacy is and why in Chamorro.

Zapanta's advocacy is based on waste and air pollution management, saying she wants to make the community more knowledgeable in ways of disposing trash that does not pollute the air.

Kirby hopes to spread the knowledge of environmental health and ways to practice it. She says that climate change is one of the main factors affecting the islands, and that

See MISS on Next Page

Filipinos to mark 123rd PH Independence Day at MHS

Saipan's Filipino community will celebrate the Philippines' 123rd Independence Day tomorrow, June 12, with a flag-raising ceremony and other proceedings at Marianas High School at 7:30am.

According to Philippine honorary consul to CNMI Glicerio "Eli" Arago, he expects to see many members of the Filipino community at MHS on that day.

The event will have Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), and TanHoldings CEO Jerry Tan as guests.

Part of the celebration will be the signing of a proclamation of a CNMI-Republic of the Philippines Friendship, which Torres will sign.

United Filipino Organization president Marcelo Ma-

silungan will also speak.

When asked for comments and his hopes for this Saturday, Arago sympathizes with his countrymen battling the hardships brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, and encourages the CNMI's Filipino community to help one another. Arago also hopes that all Filipinos keep the "Bayanihan" spirit alive this weekend, referring to a communal spirit of unity and helping others. *(Joshua Santos)*

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Mailing Address: Street/Box _____ Village _____ Zip Code _____

Mental health training for Tanapag students

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

Tanapag Middle School students are being treated to a back-to-back Social Emotional Development Workshop that began yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

A hundred sixth graders took part in the workshop yesterday, and another hundred seventh graders are participating today, where they get to access information on mental health awareness, self-care, and mentoring, among others.

Event chair Beatrice Fatialofa said that the workshop is the brainchild of the teachers at Tanapag Middle School, who all wanted to cap the

school year by helping their students cope with the different areas of their whole being—mental, physical, emotional, and social.

"Our main goal is to teach our students how to take care of themselves socially, emotionally, because a lot of them go through anxiety, they go through stress, even in school, with everything that we have done throughout this year with online learning, with blended learning," Fatialofa said. "This year has been a hard year for them because of the pandemic. This [workshop] is a time for them to really learn about how to take care of themselves, how to take care of their mind, how to deal with stress, how to deal with anxiety, how

to deal with each other."

Helping the students are presenters from different agencies, which included the Community Guidance Center, the Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Program, LEA Community School Mental Health Awareness, the Public School System's Personal Responsibilities Educational Program, Northern Marianas College's Office of Institutional Effectiveness, as well as Rep. Joel Camacho (R-Saipan).

"We have presenters coming from different agencies...and they're doing different workshops to teach the kids to take care of themselves, how they can cope with anxiety and stress, different things that they have gone through," Fatialofa said. "This

policy Memorandum of Agreement last Wednesday.

After the CUC board's approval, assistant attorney general Jose Mafnas Jr., who is the CUC legal counsel, said that PSS will be availing 100% of its net metering benefits.

Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada said their goal is for all public schools to use alternative renewable energy this coming school year and that their target is for PSS to have 100% solar power by then.

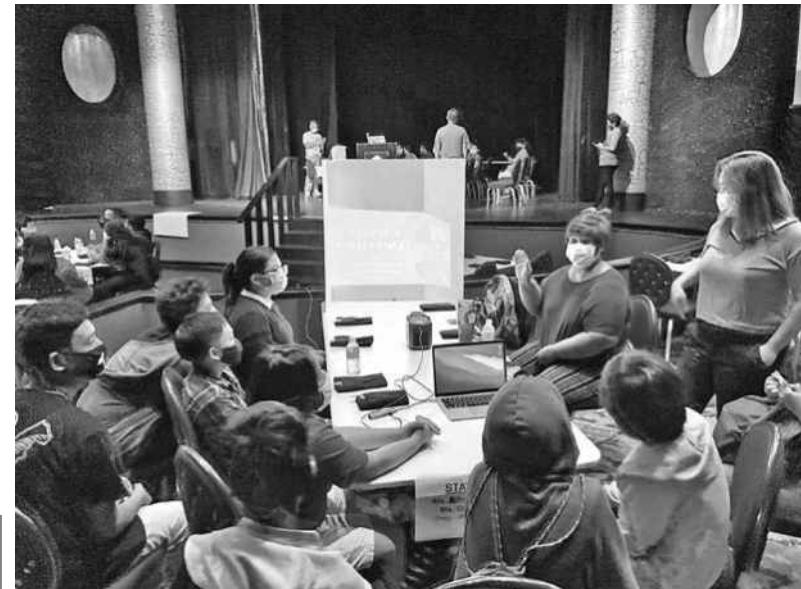
During the board meeting's public comment portion, Mocanu said he is hoping that they could all work together to make this happen.

Mocanu said this process of getting PSS an interconnection agreement to offset a great majority of its electricity use started about eight months ago when PSS submitted its application for an interconnection agreement.

He described the interconnection agreement is a bit more complicated than the standard interconnection agreement because PSS is a large entity and because it would be producing so much power.

"As such, PSS and CUC entered into negotiations to kind of change some of the terms in order that it might also benefit CUC so it wasn't losing that big of a customer," he said.

Especially with their mind, with their emotions, what they go through at home, or wherever they're at with relationships with others, there are agencies that are available to help."



Tanapag Middle School sixth graders participated in the Social Emotional Development Workshop yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan, and blended learning, due to the pandemic.

IVA MAURIN

PSS

From Page 1

the benefit of the bargain with their vendor for solar panels, they need to act quickly and will need the CUC board's guidance in order to do that.

"We're in a little bit of a time crunch since it has been eight months. Our vendor had locked in its prices and, based on those prices, have given us its submittal. Those prices are about to expire," he said in explaining PSS' position, just before the CUC board approved the CUC-PSS net metering



Board of Education and Public School System counsel Tiberius Mocanu explains their position on the need to pass PSS-Commonwealth Utilities Corp. net metering policy Memorandum of Agreement before the CUC board of directors during the board's special meeting Wednesday.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

LIBDAY

From Page 1

the pandemic is paramount to anything else," said Apatang.

"Taking a risk and letting our guard down so we could celebrate the July 4th holiday is not what we are all about. Once we are certain and given clearance from the COVID-19 Task Force, we can plan for next year's celebration. Our people come first and putting off this year's celebration is wise and the only way to keep the threat of COVID-19 under control,"

the mayor added.

The plan is still to go through with a fireworks display on July 4, in honor of the spirit of celebrating the traditional Fourth of July. It will depend on how much funds is raised in this short period of time remaining. "We will be asking for donations to help us pay a portion of the cost to have a 15- to 20-minute fireworks display," said Apatang. "To ensure control of large gatherings and the safety of our people, we will require those watching the fireworks display to remain in their parked car. The display will be at

the Garapan Fishing Base pier."

It was earlier reported that Apatang wanted a full-blown but controlled Liberation Day celebration this year and was pushing for five consecutive evenings of activities at the Garapan Fishing Base and a full-day celebration on the Fourth of July.

This year's Fourth of July is the CNMI's the 75th commemoration.

"As we continue the fight against the COVID-19, we encourage our residents to get vaccinated. We continue to hear that the vaccines do protect us from contracting the virus," the mayor said. (*Saipan Tribune*)

DPS

From Page 1

is on medical leave for possibly two weeks and asked to reschedule the budget hearing.

"So it seems like he's able to come before the committee but just asked that he can do it at a later time..." Manglona said.

Manglona said he will confirm if Guerrero is back in a week and a half and then they will schedule the hearing when the commissioner is available.

He said Guerrero apologized for failing to attend Tuesday's hearing

and explained there was an emergency on Tinian that he needed to attend.

Manglona said the commissioner suggested that the committee just go on recess and reschedule the hearing, rather than proceed with only some DPS staff and without him.

After the committee completed the hearing on the budget for the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services yesterday afternoon, Manglona announced that the resumption of the hearing for DPS budget today, Friday, will not push through as Guerrero had called that he's on medical leave.

The announcement provoked

mixed reactions among some lawmakers and other people in the House chamber.

Guerrero's absence at the DPS budget hearing last Tuesday disappointed some committee members and left many questions unanswered. Manglona then announced the continuation of the hearing for today, hoping to have Guerrero in the chamber.

Tuesday's DPS budget hearing only had DPS director for Administration Kaye Inos, DPS Bureau of Motor Vehicles director Juana Leon Guerrero, and DPS human resources manager Esther Delos Reyes.

Especially with their mind, with their emotions, what they go through at home, or wherever they're at with relationships with others, there are agencies that are available to help."

TOGETHER

From Page 1

nomic Development Authority to provide better economic development opportunities in the Marianas.

Tourism resumption plan

The Marianas Visitors Authority has announced its approved tourism resumption plan that is aimed at bringing back tourists' confidence in safely traveling to the Marianas. It's a major step toward rebuilding our tourism economy and bringing back much-needed jobs and revenue for local businesses.

The Tourism Resumption Investment Plan, or TRIP, was formulated by the CNMI Tourism Resumption Task Force after extensive discussions with industry stakeholders and experts. TRIP is a two-month pilot program that would provide subsidies and incentives to airline companies, tour operators, retail shops, hotels, and restaurants. The plan also underscores strict safety protocols and the importance of reintegrating our islands' distinct cultures into the travel experience.

Similar travel incentive programs were offered before the pandemic struck, but with the current crisis, many countries are trying more aggressive approaches to lure tourists by offering competitive tour packages and discounts on accommodations, dining, and shopping. MVA will be providing vouchers that could be used at hotels, restaurants, and stores. Additional vouchers will be extended to tourists who also visit Tinian and Rota. All vouchers will have to be spent on the islands, stimulating economic activities throughout.

Reopening safely

The projected arrival of 1,400 passengers between July and September will ignite the demand to resume business operations and bring people back to work. Businesses must secure a Safe Travels Stamp from the World Travel and Tourism Council, which can be applied for through MVA for free. Certified businesses will be eligible to participate in

TRIP's program provided they also adhere to the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force safety guidelines and all their employees are fully vaccinated.

Visitors will be keen on choosing safe destinations with high vaccination rates. As of last week, 70% of our adult population has received their first dose, way ahead of the July 4 target of President Joe Biden. The percentage of our adult residents who have been fully vaccinated rate reached 57% and is expected to rise in time for the pilot program's launch in July.

The VaccinateCNMI campaign has been largely successful, but the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force is not letting its guards down. The task force will require that all arriving passengers be screened when we reopen to tourists on July 15. PCR tests will be administered upon arrival and travelers with negative results will be transported to the hotels where they can relax, dine, and freely enjoy the hotels' amenities for four days. On the fifth day, visitors will undergo a second PCR test and another negative result will allow them to roam throughout the islands. Hotel employees in contact with the guests will also remain at the facilities for five days and tested too.

After more than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, the Marianas remains one of the safest places in the world, which puts us in a better position to offer visitors safe and unforgettable experiences. Let's do our part to support the safe resumption of tourism and help get our economy moving in the right direction.

MISS

From Page 3

she wants to specifically target illegal dumping.

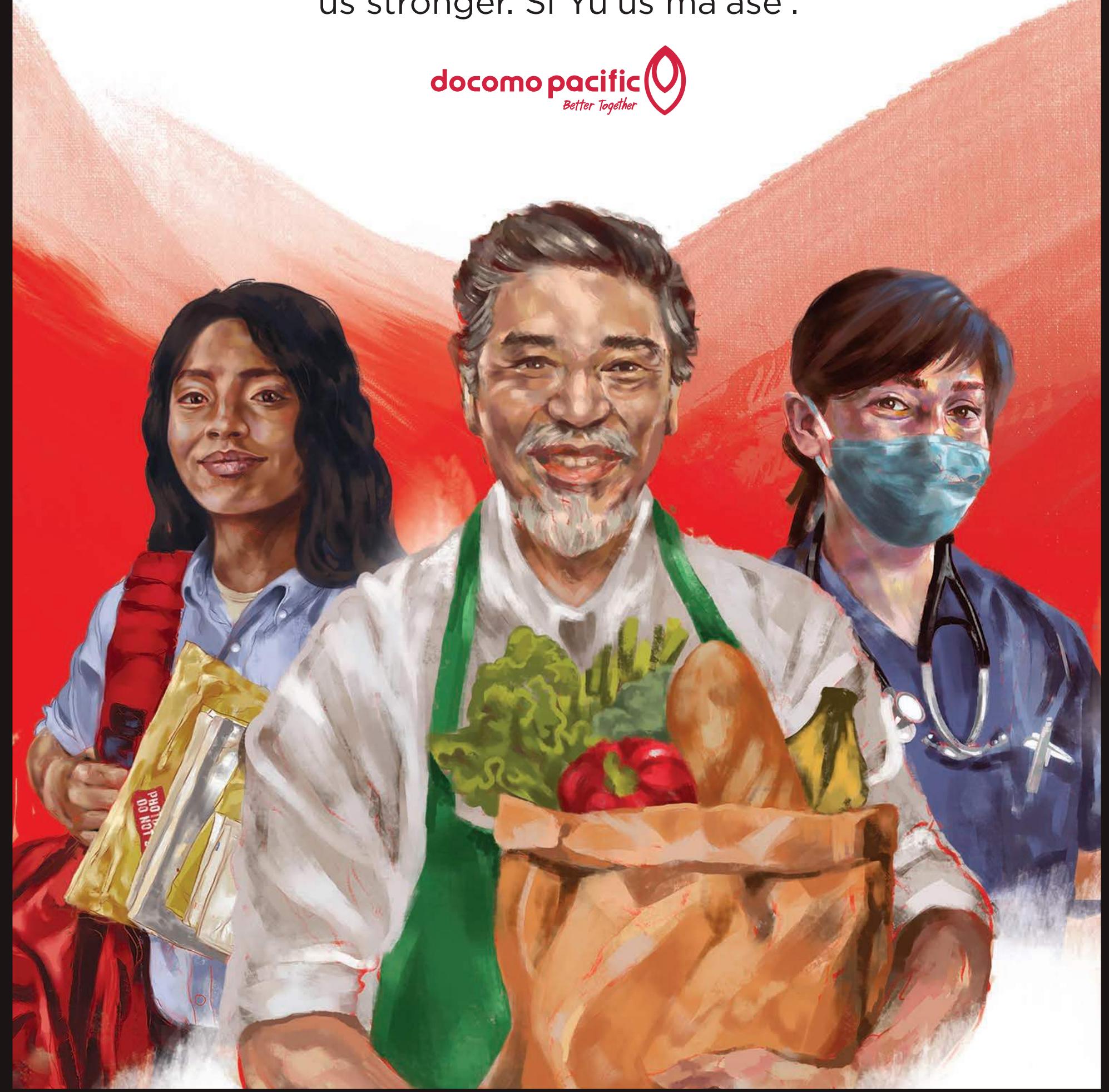
After each contestant spoke, Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang and the Miss Northern Marianas Earth event director pinned "contestant" sashes on each of the eight contestants. A photo-op followed.

The CNMI edition of the Miss Earth pageant is organized by Exquisite Production.

Rise Together

In every battle, there is someone who makes us stronger. Si Yu'us ma'åse'.

docomo pacific 
Better Together



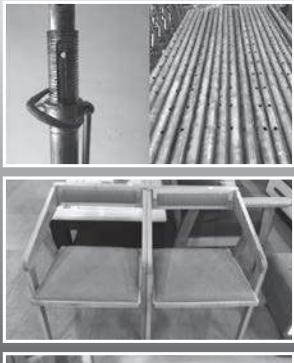
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Yulang, Kaito, Tolentino are top winners in MVA essay tilt

Among all high schoolers who penned their thoughts for the Marianas Visitors Authority's May Tourism Month essay contest, Jermaine Chloe Yulang of Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr. Sr. High School has won top honors for her submission.

The theme "Power of Travel: COVID19 Impact and Tourism Recovery in The Marianas" invited students to describe how COVID-19 has impacted the Marianas tourism community and share their thoughts how the Marianas should move forward with tourism recovery.

"The role that traveling plays in the Marianas is immense, especially in supporting our local businesses, environment, and native cultures," wrote Yulang. "Tourism impacts our local businesses by supplementing our low population and creating job opportunities. The Marianas' well-maintained natural environment is partly due to the efforts to keep them presentable for the tourists. Learning about native cultures allows tourists to learn new things and carry that culture with them throughout their lives. Almost all areas of the Marianas are affected by travel."

Rechucher Kaito of Mt. Carmel School noted the role each individual has to play in reviving tourism and making the Marianas a better place to live.

"Today, businesses are closing down due to loss of customer, the beaches are empty, and the economy has crumbled," wrote Kaito. "We as the Marianas is [sic] not only attractive to the tourists because of the scenery



Jermaine Yulang, left, is awarded first place in the Marianas Visitors Authority's Tourism Month essay contest. She is presented her award by MVA Rota Field Office supervisor David Atalig on June 8, 2021.



Rechucher Kaito, center, is awarded second place in the Marianas Visitors Authority's Tourism Month essay contest. He is shown here with his mother Yuki Rechucher, left, and MVA Administrative Services manager Carol Chargualaf on June 4, 2021.

MVA

and environment, but also the people. Everyone can put in a little bit of love to the environment, which will bring big changes, making significant differences. Community service, voluntary work, effort in making the environment look clean can also help in making our lives better. I believe that with Saipan's unique cultures, we can revive the tourism in due time making ourselves even more attractive."

Third place winner Leyonne F. Tolentino of Mt. Carmel School emphasized the need to balance the needs of tourists, the people, the community and the environment in reviving tourism.

Community service, voluntary work, effort in making the environment look clean can also help in making our lives better. I believe that with Saipan's unique cultures, we can revive the tourism in due time making ourselves even more attractive."

"The Marianas should move forward with the tourism industry by prioritizing the health and safety of everyone in the community, and make sure that health policies are being well coordinated to protect the workers and tourists," said Tolentino. "Inform our market about how successful we are in combating transmission of the virus in our community so the tourists have confidence in visiting the Marianas. Rethink how tourism interacts with our society, government agency, and natural resources, so we can manage the way we want to market it better."

Cash prizes were awarded to the winners: \$300 for first place, \$200 for second place, and \$100 for third place. The contest was open to all public and private school students grades 9-12 in the Marianas. (MVA)



Leyonne Tolentino, second left, is awarded third place in the Marianas Visitors Authority's Tourism Month essay contest on June 4, 2021. From left, MVA Community Projects manager Martin Dueñas, Tolentino, his father, Rowell D. Tolentino, and MVA Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda.

MVA

CNMI Fisheries Working Group is seeking more documentation for grant assistance

The CNMI CARES-Act Fisheries Working Group was made aware Wednesday that one additional document is required in order to process payment checks for CNMI eligible applicants under the 2020 COVID-19 Fisheries Assistance funded by Section 12005 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

According to Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, all eligible applicants must provide a completed Internal Revenue Service Tax Form W-9. This form displays an individual or business establishment's name, taxpayer identification number, address, and signature.

The submission of this form would allow authorities to collect taxes on this grant assistance. The PSMFC also informed the CNMI CARES-Act Fisheries Working Group that Guam and American Samoa fisheries entities had to submit this document before any of their checks were to be issued.

The additional required document will push the payout date past the June 15 scheduled date. The Working Group has asked the patience for all applicants as the required form is an essential piece of

the process.

Completed forms must be submitted to the Office of Grants Management within seven calendar days or no later than June 18, 2021 at 4:30pm. Their temporary office is at the former Pena House Boutique Shop/Bank of Saipan building in Chalan Kanoa. Call the Office of Grants Management at 235-4211. Forms may be accessed online at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>.

Individuals unable to access or print a W-9 form may visit OGM in Chalan Kanoa from 7:30am to 4:30pm before the June 18 deadline. (PR)

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (05/19/2021)
- V. Public Comments
- VI. Chairperson's Report
- VII. Director's Report
 - Update on the 4 proposed regulations
 - Update on the amendment to P.L. 15-105 – Removal of Limited Terms for HCPLB
- VIII. Investigator's Report
- IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
 - A. Governor's Office
 - B. Legislature
- X. Old Business
 - Peni M. Biukoto
- XI. New Business
- XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
 - A. New Application
 - Dr. E. Chang – Physician
 - Dr. S. Shushunov – Physician
 - B. Renewal Applications
- XIII. Miscellaneous Business
- XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
- XV. Announcements
 - A. Next Meeting Date
 - B. Adjournment of Meeting





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Congratulations
to the
2021 Graduating Class



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accepted to the following colleges and universities:

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- California State University, Long Beach
- Christopher Newport University
- Evangel University
- George Mason University
- George Washington University
- Indiana University, Bloomington
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- International Christian University
- James Madison University
- Liberty University

- Pacific Lutheran University
- Purdue University
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Sacramento State University
- San Diego State University
- Seattle Pacific University
- Sophia University
- Syracuse University
- University of Buffalo
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Illinois of Chicago
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- University of Iowa
- University of Memphis
- University of Oregon

- University of Portland
- University of San Diego
- University of San Francisco
- University of Washington
- UC Berkeley
- UC Davis
- UC Irvine
- UCLA
- UC Merced
- UC Santa Barbara
- UC Santa Cruz
- Washington State University
- Wesleyan University
- Western Washington University



500 Sails has formed an ad hoc strategic planning committee to develop their five-year strategic plan. Members of the committee are, from left, Arthur De Oro, Peter Perez, Emma Perez, Anthony Camacho, Jayna Shoda Meyer, Victoria Deleon Guerrero, Daniel Brown, and Marjorie Daria (Not pictured: Joshua Santos, Tiara Evangelista, Leslie Camacho, and Gordon Marciano).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK • Saipan, MP 96950-1220
Telephone: (670) 664-4282 • Facsimile: (670) 235-5131

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 *et seq.*), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold its regular board meeting on **Wednesday, June 16, 2021, at 10:30 a.m.** The meeting will be held at the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building. The following agenda will be considered and public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA*

- I. Preliminary Matters
 - A. Call to Order
 - B. Roll Call
 - C. Adoption of Agenda
 - D. Adoption of Minutes
 - 1. February 26, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
 - 2. March 4, 2021 Special Board Meeting
 - 3. May 12, 2021 Special Board Meeting
 - 4. May 28, 2021 Special Board Meeting
- E. Correspondence
- II. Management Reports
 - A. Acting Executive Director's Report
 - B. Chief Financial Officer's Report
- III. Committee Reports
- IV. Old Business
 - A. CPA-CUC Lease Agreement (PP3) Update
 - B. Power Plant, DE5 and DE7 Update
 - C. Cost of Service Study Update
- V. New Business
 - A. Procurement Matters for Approval
 - B. In-House Legal Counsel
 - C. Disputed Accounts and Customer Service Workflow
- VI. Public Comments**
 - ** All interested persons are welcome to attend, and submit written and oral testimony on the above-agenda items. Public Comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes.
- ** Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the CUC Board of Directors may vote to meet at any time in executive session, in consultation with the Legal Counsel on matters deemed privileged and confidential.

/s/
MIRANDA V. MANGLONA, Chairwoman

* In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items may be added to the above listing only by a recorded vote of the majority members of the governing body.
** All interested persons are welcome to attend, and submit written and oral testimony on the above-agenda items. Public Comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes.

** Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the CUC Board of Directors may vote to meet at any time in executive session, in consultation with the Legal Counsel on matters deemed privileged and confidential.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID RFP NO.: DPW/HSEM21-RFP-025

SUBMISSION DATE: June 30, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Design/Build for CNMI All Hazard Warning System, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE DPW, TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, 2ND FLOOR, OLEAI COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on **June 15, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Homeland Security and Management Agency**, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **June 22, 2021** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director** Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor, Oleai Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA /S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON /S/ GERALD DELON GUERRERO
SECRETARY, DPW ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S Special Assistant-HSEM



PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RFP21-CHCC/FACILITY-002

DESIGN/BUILD SERVICE FOR THE 3-LEVEL PARKING GARAGE

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) is soliciting sealed proposals from prospective firms to provide Professional Services for Architectural and Construction of CHCC's 3-Level Parking Garage Project.

This procurement is in accordance with the CHCC procurement Regulations. Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with CHCC §140-80.1-210 (Competitive Sealed Proposals of the CHCC Procurement Regulations).

The Request for Proposals and Scope of Work is available on June 4th, 2021, online at www.chcc.gov.mp, navigate to the RFP tab on the left navigation bar, click on the URL for this **RFP21-CHCC/FACILITY-002**.

Inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing via email to Ms. Cora P. Ada, Director of Procurement at cora.ada@chcc.health no later than June 25th, 2021.

Selection Criteria:

Technical criteria

- i. 25% Experience and Qualifications in similar or related projects
- ii. 25% Technical approach to meet deliverables and meet timelines of the project.
- iii. Must be financially stable and must have adequate equipment and tools.
- iv. 25% Project Approach - demonstrate understanding and ability to meet requirements
- iv. 25% Cost Proposal

The successful proposer will be subjected to a responsibility determination in accordance with CHCC Procurement Regulations §140-80.1-245.

Please email your proposal to Ms. Corazon P. Ada, Director, CHCC Division of Procurement and Supply, at cora.ada@chcc.health or submit five (5) hard copies including original copy, **no later than 10:00 AM Chamorro Standard Time (CHST) on July 5th, 2021** at the CHCC Main Campus Office. Proposals received after the date and time will not be accepted.

Please note submission instructions:

- All submissions must include the **RFP21-CHCC/FACILITY-002** and Project Title in the email subject.
- All documents must be submitted in Adobe PDF Format.
- All pages of your proposal must include the RFP # and Project Title in the header, plus page number in the footer.

Failure to follow the instructions regarding the submission of RFP responses may result in the CHCC's choice to disqualify such proposals.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

CNMI Government

INVITATION FOR BID

PROJECT NO.: CPA-IFB-004-21

BIDS SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JUNE 11, 2021, TIME: 2:00 P.M.
PROCUREMENT OF ONE (1) UNIT TRACTOR & MOWER FOR
THE TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, TINIAN

THE BID PACKAGE WHICH INCLUDES THE EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS AND OTHER CONSIDERATION IS AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP BEGINNING MAY 4TH, 2021 AT THE CPA ADMIN OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ARRIVAL BUILDING.

BIDDERS ARE TO SUBMIT ONE (1) ORIGINAL AND TWO (2) COPIES OF THE BIDS TO THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND MARKED: "PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-004-21". BIDDERS SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION ALL CHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCUREMENT BEFORE FINALIZING ITS BID.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CPA PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION §40-50-1020, §40-50-1015, & §40-50-1025 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, FINANCIAL INTEREST, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CPA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CPA.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
PHONE: (670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

BENJAMIN TAISACAN MANGLONA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT CPA-RA-003-17

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide Construction Management Services for the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport Drainage Improvements, CPA-RA-003-17.

The project is being funded by CPA. This project is in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations and procedures shall be in full compliance with Section 40-50-202 Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager at wpreater@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for RFQ statements must be submitted to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA Executive Assistant/Project Manager, at the CPA Administration Office or emailed to wpreater@cnmiports.com by no later than 5:00 p.m., local time, Friday, June 11, 2021.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. (CHST), FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 2021**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

MANGO membership doubles in eight months

Since October 2020, the Marianas Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations has already doubled its membership from 29 organizations and individuals to 58.

"This is a great achievement given that one of our goals is to provide training and support to CNMI nonprofits so they can improve their delivery of services and programs," said MANGO chair Maisie Tenorio.

The Lemmai-Mei Nonprofit Incubator Project is one of MANGO's initiatives that is already reaping benefits for the first cohort that participated.

The board of directors for Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence has already done a self-review. It will also begin work on a strategic plan. 500 Sails also formed an ad hoc committee and began work on its five-year strategic plan.

MANGO is conducting a free board of directors workshop on Thursday, June 24, 2021, from 8:30am-11:30am. Registration is being accepted at: <https://forms.gle/P4fDwdzDq9bYN-Dx06>. Seating is limited for in-person participation. (PR)

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: 5/20/21



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PHONE: (670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PARKING LOT EXPANSION CPA-TA-001-20

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide Construction Management Services for the Tinian International Airport Parking Lot Expansion, CPA-TA-001-20.

The project is being funded by CPA. This project is in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations and procedures shall be in full compliance with Section 40-50-202 Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager at wpreater@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for RFQ statements must be submitted to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA Executive Assistant/Project Manager, at the CPA Administration Office or emailed to wpreater@cnmiports.com by no later than 5:00 p.m., local time, Friday, June 11, 2021.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. (CHST), FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 2021**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: 5/20/21

Docomo marks COVID-19 anniversary with message

TAMUNING, Guam—Docomo Pacific commemorates the anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic with a special campaign called “Rise Together,” part of which is the display of a Rise Together Banner at the company’s headquarters in Tamuning, Guam.

Created by local artist Joshua Agerstrand, he said the team at Docomo Pacific reached out to him to create portraits of frontline workers for a thank you and support campaign encouraging residents to “Rise Together.”

“I was excited as well as nervous to work on this project and to speak about our frontline workers and first responders. It was a big responsibility to create work that reflects on what was such a difficult time for many of us in the Marianas.

“After creating images to represent our amazing medical front-liners, I had to reflect on what other icons could represent the sacrifice and hard work of our community. I thought about who I saw everyday last year. I thought of the grocery store worker who served their community during the most uncertain and chaotic times of the pandemic and to our postal workers delivering us our essential and non-essential items to keep us

sane and help us feel safe during our long stretches of working from home.

“These images represent all of the strong people who never stopped working for the community, for everyone who kept the lights on, kept us fed, kept us safe and gave us hope that we were [going to] make

it through this together. To me this year felt like a long aftermath from a typhoon, where our community came together, arm in arm and helped each other weather one of our biggest storms,” he said.

In a statement about the campaign, Docomo Pacific said: “Last March, the coro-



The Rise Together Banner is displayed at Docomo Pacific’s headquarters in Tamuning, Guam. Artwork by local artist Joshua Agerstrand.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

navirus outbreak reached pandemic level. The virus threatened our community and lockdowns defined life in Guam and the CNMI. 2020 was a year of upheaval, loss, and constant change. One year later, as we enter a new era of hope, we recount our shared

experiences and honor those who help us Rise Together.

“Rooted in the *Inafa’maolek* spirit, Docomo Pacific stands with our frontline workers committed to keeping us safe. From the medical staff that nurse our sick, to all the hard-working people who bravely

kept our community going during the pandemic. The Marianas had the courage to adjust their daily lives to this new norm; using technology more and more through remote working and online learning.

“Today we remember, that in every battle, there is someone who makes us stronger. *Fanohge Marianas!*” (PR)

ship office will be present at these sessions.

Attendees will qualify to have their application fee and their placement test fees waived for NMC’s upcoming fall 2021 semester—a savings of about \$75.

NMC’s summer semester will start on June 21, 2021 and its fall 2021 semester will begin on Aug. 16, 2021. A list of the classes that are offered can be found at www.marianas.edu. (PR)

NMC to host info sessions on Tinian

Tinian residents who are interested in furthering their education are encouraged to attend Northern Marianas College’s free information sessions on June 16 and June 30, 2021.

The event will cover information on the admissions application process, financial aid, class registration, and academic programs and services.

The first info session will be held on June 16, from

10am to 11:30am at the Tinian Center Library. The second info session will be held on June 30 from 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the Tinian Mayor’s Office conference room. As

part of NMC’s COVID-19 safety protocols, participants are asked to wear masks or face coverings when attending these sessions.

Staff members from the Tinian Municipal Scholar-



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P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) is inviting qualified contractors to submit their qualifications and bid proposals for the TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ARFF BUILDING RENOVATION - REPACKAGED, TINIAN, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, AIP NO. 3-69-0011-28/30.

Bidders are to submit one original and two copies of their bid which shall be sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: “TNI ARFF BUILDING RENOVATIONS - REPACKAGED, Tinian International Airport, Tinian, CNMI, AIP No. 3-69-0011-28/30,” and submitted no later than **2:00 p.m. Friday, JUNE 25, 2021**, to the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd floor the Arrival Building at the Saipan International Airport. Sealed proposals will be publicly opened and read at the Saipan Airport Conference Room immediately after the deadline on the same day.

The project, in general, consist of the TNI ARFF Building renovation and extension, and construction of new building. It includes demolition of existing ARFF Dispatch and first bay of the aforesaid building. A three-story building will be constructed as this site, and the remaining building will receive extension of frontage at Bay 2 and Bay 3. A new auxiliary building will be constructed adjacent to the building. Also, this project includes replacement of existing chain-link fence, additional parking and other associated works, all in accordance with the Project Drawings and Specifications.

The Project is being financed by funds from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The contract award, if it is to be made, will be made within one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the receipt of bids. CPA reserves the right to hold such bids in effect for one hundred eighty (180) calendar days from the date of bid opening.

A DVD containing the Bid Proposal and Contract Documents including plans and specifications, may be obtained at the Commonwealth Ports Authority’s Accounting Office, 2nd floor of the Departure Terminal, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, upon the payment of **TWO HUNDRED U.S. DOLLARS (\$200.00)** for each set of plans and documents in electronic form (DVD). The payment is nonrefundable. Payment shall be made in cash, cashier’s check or U.S. postal money order payable to the “Commonwealth Ports Authority”.

A pre-bid conference will be held at the Tinian Ports Manager’s Office at the Tinian International Airport at **11:00 AM, Friday, June 11, 2021**, to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. A site visit will be followed by the pre-bid conference. This pre-bid is not mandatory and minutes of the pre-bid will be distributed to all parties who have picked up the DVD containing the plans and specifications.

Questions should be submitted to the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, in writing, at least fourteen (14) days prior to the bid opening date.

Each bid proposal shall be on a form furnished by the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The bidders shall use the bid schedule form available on the DVD. Each bidder must also supply all information required by the bid proposal documents and specifications. It is the contractor’s responsibility to inform CPA as soon as possible if there is a problem accessing the information on the DVD. Contractors are to verify all information provided using the table of contents for the specifications and the plan that shows the index of drawings.

The contract period for construction of the project in its entirety shall be **Four Hundred Thirty (430) Calendar Days**. Liquidated damages in the amount of **One Thousand (\$1,000.00) Dollars** shall be assessed the Contractor for each calendar day that the completion of the Project is delayed beyond the contract completion date without approved excuse.

The apparent low bidder will be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are “responsive and responsible.” This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and personnel, and bonding and insurance. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be “responsive or responsible”, their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the bid schedule or mis-enter of the quantity of line item; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA’s best interest.

Each bid shall be accompanied by either a bid bond by a U.S. Treasury listed surety company, a certified check, or a cashier’s check in the amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the bid price. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

All mechanics and laborers for this procurement project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by the CNMI or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. A copy of the Department of the Federal Labor Wage Rate Determination is included in Section GP 70 of the specifications. The bidder shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract and include associated costs in the bid proposal. The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the specifications, and bid proposal documents are available for inspection at the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 USC §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders or offerors that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

The United States Secretary of Transportation has granted the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands an exemption from the requirements of the Department of Transportation’s Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) regulation, which later became the Department of Transportation’s Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, as it relates to FAA grant programs. The Secretary of Transportation has not determined that a portion of those requirements should be reinstated.

By submitting a bid/proposal under this solicitation, the bidder or offeror certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred or suspended by any Federal department or agency from participation in this transaction.

In addition to the above, all bidders shall comply with all other Federal requirements under this procurement, including but not limited to Buy American Preference, Foreign Trade Restriction, Davis Bacon, Veteran’s Preference, Affirmative Action and Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-free Workplace. Further details on all Federal requirements are provided in the specifications.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: May 21, 2021

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A high-profile COVID-19 cautionary tale

Professional golfer Jon Rahm nearly fell to his knees on Saturday after learning that he had tested positive for COVID-19 and had to withdraw from the Memorial Tournament in Ohio. In that moment of anguish, did he give any thought to everyone else affected by his decision not to vaccinate weeks ago?

Rahm had just finished the third round (of four) at the PGA event when officials delivered the bad news next to the 18th green. He held a six-stroke lead, and in golf, that's nearly insurmountable. Had he won, the first-place prize was \$1.67 million. Second place was worth \$1 million.

But don't cry for Rahm, a Spaniard who is No. 3 in the world rankings. He's won nearly \$4 million already this season. His family, which now lives in Arizona, won't go hungry. He also has lucrative sponsorships, though presumably not from Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson and Johnson.

Rahm could have gotten a vaccine shot in Arizona in March, and the tour has provided access. He could have been fully vaccinated by the Memorial Tournament. If he had been, he wouldn't have been in the contact-tracing protocol, and given the documented effectiveness of the vaccines, he probably wouldn't have contracted the virus.

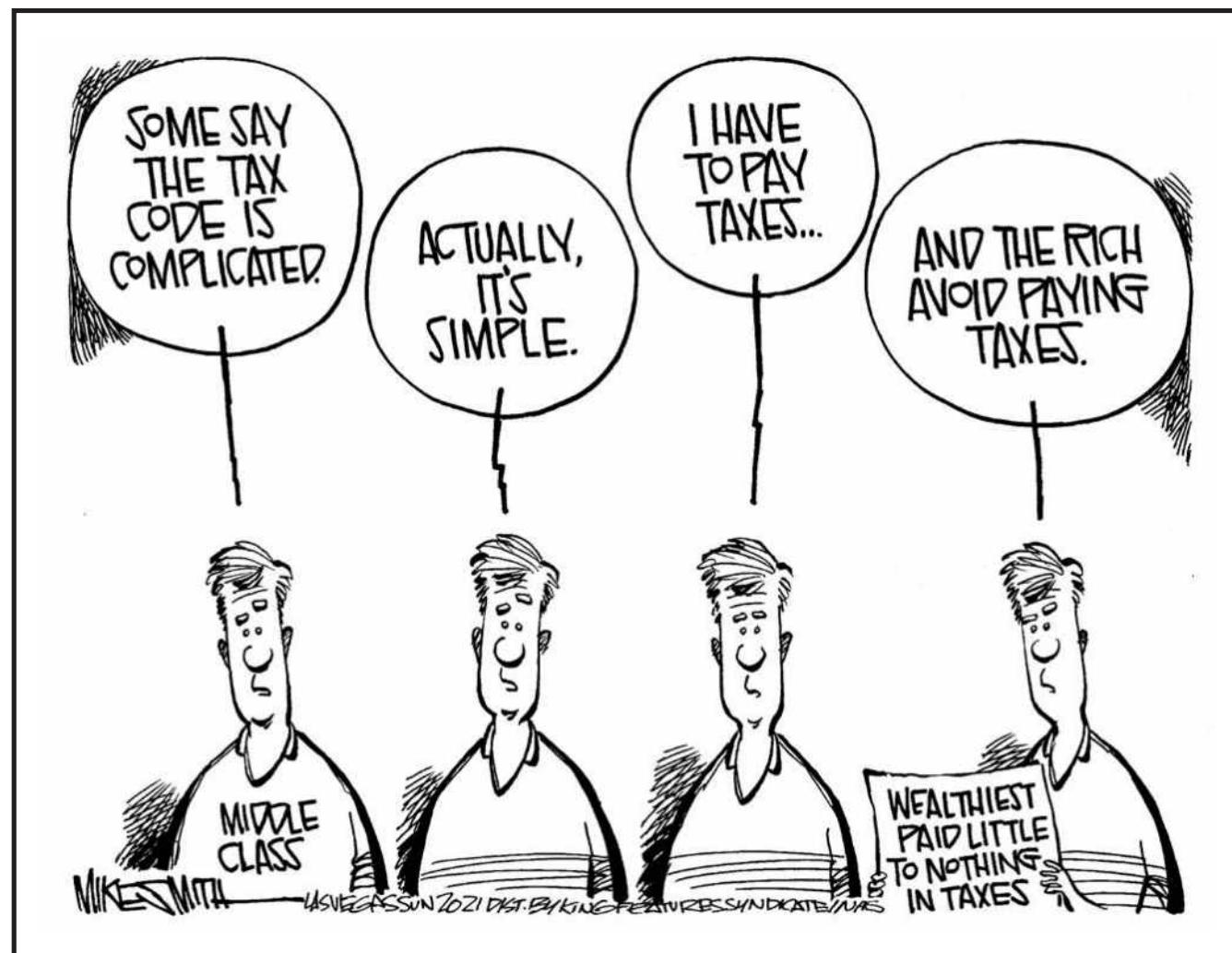
But he wasn't. Instead, he exposed other golfers and caddies to the virus. Some of them also have chosen not to be vaccinated. He also potentially exposed uncounted tournament staff, officials, journalists and fans. No major sporting event occurs without dozens, even hundreds of people working just off camera. Many of those people are at greater risk of bad COVID-19 outcomes than a 26-year-old athlete.

Whether to vaccinate is a personal choice, as vaccine-reluctant Americans are quick to remind everyone. But that choice has consequences. If one chooses not to vaccinate, one must own the deleterious outcomes. Rahm lost a lot of money, but his real impact might only unfold over weeks.

He has given the PGA Tour new cause to think about its vaccine protocols, and it should put a vaccine mandate for players and caddies on the table. Fans might reconsider whether sporting events have truly become safe enough to attend. And if someone exposed to Rahm winds up sick, in the hospital or worse, it could weigh heavily on his conscience.

Ironically, the Memorial Tournament was the first PGA Tour event to feature a vaccine pop-up tent. It was set up in coordination with OhioHealth and offered any fan a free one-shot vaccine. Few people took advantage of it.

It might feel like America is moving into a post-pandemic reality, but COVID-19 is pernicious and still out there. As lockdowns and mask-mandates ease, risk remains, especially for anyone who makes the personal—and foolish—choice not to vaccinate.



How work will change permanently after the pandemic

Last spring, the COVID-19 pandemic caused perhaps the worst job losses since the Great Depression. The decrease in the labor force participation rate—from 63.3% to 61.3%—has been steeper than that seen in the Great Recession and is among the largest 12-month declines in the post-World War II era, according to the Pew Research Center and federal labor data.

But for all the pain, this terrifying year could augur potentially positive changes in the workplace. Pandemics change economies, a truth going back centuries. The post-COVID-19 period may well see a transformative, long-lasting effect on employers.

The shifting balance between employers and workers was evident before the pandemic, with wages for the first time in decades rising for lower-income laborers. While the unemployment rate is over 6% and the country had 8 million fewer positions in March than before the pandemic, there's still a growing shortage of workers and 7.4 million unfilled jobs.

Some of this is due to demographic shifts caused by lower birthrates; U.S. population growth for ages between 16 and 64 has dropped from 20% in the 1980s to less than 5% in the last decade. Some conservatives blame the stimulus package and extended unemployment for workers for the current labor shortage. Others, such as former Obama chief economist Jason Furman, also blame wariness connected to the virus.

But whatever the causes, the tighter labor market gives workers more leverage with employers, allowing even lower-end service workers to demand signing bonuses, higher wages and more humane working conditions.

White-collar workers also face a new reality. Once dragooned into offices often far from affordable homes, they have adapted to new hybrid models, with remote work being done from home, dispersed offices and coffee shops.

Stanford economist Nicholas Bloom suggests 20% of work will be done from home even after the pandemic ends, up from 5% in 2019. Various studies also show that remote workers have been more productive—a result business executives welcome along with lower office space costs.

Some human resources managers fear large-scale resistance to attempts to force workers back into the office full time. When the CEO of the Washingtonian magazine suggested that those working at home would be “less valuable” and easier to “let go,” the workers went on daylong strike. No surprise there; a recent survey of 5,000 employed adults found that 4 out of 10 expected

By JOEL KOTKIN
Los Angeles Times

Joel Kotkin is the presidential fellow in urban futures at Chapman University and executive director of the Urban Reform Institute. He is the author of The Coming of Neo-Feudalism.” @joelkotkin



some remote work flexibility after the pandemic.

For many millennials, the hybrid and dispersed model of work, including suburban satellite offices, addresses issues like “life-work balance,” something important to millennials and particularly to women with children who are trying to return to the labor force once schools reopen.

The pandemic has also altered the geography of jobs. One recent report from Upwork suggests that between 14 million and 23 million Americans are seeking to move to a less expensive and less crowded place.

Many leading tech firms now expect a large proportion of their workforce to work remotely after the pandemic. Some three-quarters of venture capitalists and tech firm founders, notes one recent survey, predict their ventures to operate totally, or mostly, online. Since the pandemic began, according to a study by Big Technology, tech growth has been most evident in Madison, Wisconsin, Cleveland and Sacramento, while New York, San Francisco, Boston and Chicago have taken hits.

In terms of industries, the skilled trades may offer the biggest opportunities for middle- and working-class people. Today manufacturing employment is expanding more rapidly than in almost four decades; job openings in the industrial sector are up more than 50% since February 2020. Companies such as John Deere are struggling to keep pace with new orders because of a persistent shortage of workers willing to take jobs in its Iowa factories, a phenomenon common across the industrial economy.

Overall, there are an estimated 500,000 manufacturing jobs unfilled right now. The current shortage of welders alone is expected to grow to 400,000 by 2024. Much the same can be said about logistics and shipping, which kept the country running during the pandemic lockdowns. A shortage of tank truck drivers

See PANDEMIC on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Commencement address for NMC's Class of 2021

Editor's Note: The following is the transcript of the speech made by the author as commencement speaker of the Northern Marianas College Class of 2021. He delivered this speech to his fellow graduates at the Saipan World Resort on May 21, 2021 during NMC's Commencement Exercise.

Thank you so much for allowing me to be up here for a few moments. I am truly honored and privileged to be your student speaker today.

Before I continue, I want to recognize and thank our own interim president Frankie Eliptico for his leadership and our NMC Proa team, faculty and staff, for their unwavering courage and commitment to seeing the mission through. So thank you very much.

Graduates, today is a glorious day for ourselves, for our families and for our island community. I hope to reflect some of your thoughts about your experiences over the last few years, whether that be two, three, or four years or however long it took. It doesn't matter. What matters is that we made it. And we made it together in the achievement of our personal goal of becoming college graduates.

As I think back, we have overcome unimaginable circumstances—from navigating our way this last year, in the face of COVID-19: from in-person classes to virtual blended learning to Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018 with no classrooms.

We did it. We did not give up. We remained determined, we persevered and have come out stronger. We are forever bonded by these common experiences. It was tough. Speaking of tough, let us keep in mind those of us who could not be sitting here today alongside us. They are no less than we are because life can be tough. We hope that being here today will encourage them. They

are brothers, they are sisters, family members and friends. It is my hope that they never abandon their personal goals. And if that personal goal is to be a college graduate, then they need to come back to NMC when they are ready. Today we speak for them as well.

So here we are...the day which we have waited for a long time. As we begin to sail on our new course, I would like to leave you with these two words: servant leadership.

You see, I look into this crowd, our graduating class...and all I see are leaders. Leaders called to be men and women for others. Genuine leaders called to serve their teams and put the team first. Compassionate leaders who will serve our community, whether it be in our homes, our villages, islands, or in our nation.

There are four points that I want to speak to as these relate to servant leadership.

So the first is mistakes. As human beings, it is natural that we make mistakes. And these are signals to ourselves that we are trying something new. The most important thing about mistakes is what we do afterward. If we can look at it, learn quickly, adjust, and move in the direction of our goal to improve our lives, then there is no limit to the possibilities of our potential. That is what I see when I look into this graduating class.

The second is mentorship. I encourage each of us to find a mentor who has already walked the path that we plan to walk and shares a similar journey to our own. In walking with this mentor, we will accelerate our learning curve with the knowledge that they share with us. This gift will save us from the hassle of making unnecessary mistakes.

And when you've had enough work experience and walked on your own path for a while, become a mentor to the younger members of your team so they can grow as well. Their growth

By JAMES KENNEDY BENJAMIN
Special to the Saipan Tribune



James Kennedy Benjamin completed his Associates in Arts in Business degree this year.

will lead to change and that change will lead to progress for you and me and for the people of our community.

This leads me to my third point which is to give back. Give back to your community. There is a saying here that goes: It takes a village to raise a child. And as we grow from childhood into adult, let's make sure that we turn around and give back to our villages, give back to our community that gave so much to us. Get involved with those civic organizations of our community that aim to improve our society because it is the right thing to do.

And finally, let us remember that our greatest strength comes from being grateful for what we already have. Someone wise told me "in gratitude there is a great source of energy and of peace." At the end of a good day or not so good day, remember to count your blessings. Let's give thanks to whichever higher power it is that you believe in. Giving thanks for the gift of life, the gift of friendship, the gift of knowledge and education. Be thankful for those who helped get you here like Google, Wikipedia and coffee. Just kidding, I mean your family and friends. Be thankful and count your blessings as I count mine.

In closing my fellow graduates, my fellow Proas, remember today symbolizes our commitment to our personal goals and our collective goals. We speak for those who are not here.

We celebrate our individual achievements, but also those achievements of like-minded and like-hearted people...who know from experience that life is tough and it can be unpredictable. But if we continue to work hard and work together, there is nothing that we cannot accomplish as individuals and as a community. I am honored to be graduating alongside fine men and fine women, compassionate leaders in service within our homes, within our villages, on our islands and in this nation.

Congratulations once again, si yu'us ma'ase, ghilisou remi, kalangan and thank you.

PANDEMIC

From Page 10

could restrict gas deliveries this summer. The shortfall is now so severe that Amazon has set up its own incubator for new trucking companies.

The pandemic has also sparked an entrepreneurial revival. Across the U.S., about 4.4 million applications for new businesses were filed last year, compared with roughly 3.5 million in 2019, according to an analysis of data from the Census Bureau. In California, 442,324 were filed in 2020, a 21.7% increase from 2019. We may be seeing the rise of a whole new set of startups that remain dispersed in their operations, saving money on rent and locating in more affordable places.

This is not to minimize the pandemic's devastating effect on countless workers and companies. The empty malls, creaking Main Streets and abandoned storefronts, even in Manhattan, showed the depth of struggles in some parts of the economy well before the pandemic, which makes recovery for them that much harder.

Overall, though, the post-pandemic economy could produce shifts helpful to workers. The resurgent economy may push up wages for workers with skills—not just for programmers, but cooks, machinists, truck drivers, electricians and carpenters.

The labor shortage also offers a chance to improve work structures, particularly for people of color, who by 2032 will constitute half the U.S. working class, and for the entire beleaguered middle class. After 2020's pain and dislocation, we need to focus on ways to make employment conditions and the economy better for all Americans.

'We take this very seriously' and other clichés of the moment

By STEVE FRANK
THE BALTIMORE SUN

Every so often, like cicadas, a buzzword emerges from the popular dialect and becomes omnipresent in the media lexicon. In the early aughts, the word "nuanced" exploded across the cultural landscape to excuse a politician who couldn't speak straight or a writer who couldn't write. In 2004, Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry called his ever-shifting position on the war in Iraq "nuanced" as a way of explaining why he was for it before he was against it. Since then, virtually every politician adopted a "nuanced" position on major issues until, finally, George W. Bush proclaimed "I don't do nuance."

The current cliché working its way to iconic status is the phrase "we take this seriously." Or, to show they really mean it, "we take this very seriously." The phrase is now almost mandatory in any corporate statement of apology, regret or acknowledgment of allegations of sexual harassment. In a recent case, the Ford Motor Company responded to a lawsuit claiming sexual harassment in the workplace by stating "Ford does not tolerate sexual harassment or discrimination. We take those claims very seriously and investigate them thoroughly." Countering claims of sexual misconduct, an Ohio bishop in with United Methodist Church said, "we take this seriously—because people matter."

It is also used more broadly in response to any charge of bias, negligence, incompetence or malfeasance. In responding to Prince Harry's recent criticism, Buckingham Palace issued a statement declaring that the allegations—particularly those involving race—"are taken very seriously and will be addressed by the family privately."

Addressing cyberattacks, White House Communications Director Kate Bedingfield said the White House was taking reports of "energy attacks" against its personnel "very seriously."

After being ranked the worst cellphone carrier in the United States, AT&T proclaimed that "we take this seriously and we continually look for new ways to improve the customer experience." Domino's Pizza even employs the phrase on social me-

dia: When a customer complained on Twitter that his pizza was not "fresh," Domino's responded "we take this seriously and want to investigate. Can you please DM us about your order?"

If you have yet to hear or notice this latest buzzphrase, just "wait for it," as they say in cliché world. It's become obligatory in every crisis manager's handbook and is coming soon to a screen near you.

There are, of course, other rising clichés competing for buzzword status: unpack, metrics, stakeholders, I'm just saying, inflection point, follow the science, it's all good, curated, artisan, drill down, reach out, touch base, circle back, pivot, loop in, the new normal, bandwidth, synergy, breaking news (does Wolf Blitzer wake up in the middle of the night shouting "breaking news?"), on the table, off the table, transparency, we're in this together, challenging, narrative, messaging, on the ground, going forward, it is what it is and literally. Every vapid expression will have its 15 minutes of fame. It seems like only yesterday that every final paragraph began with "at the end of the day."

Perhaps the most amusing idiom today is the ludicrous "spoken hashtag" where people actually speak the word "hashtag" before another word to show how hip they are, as in "hashtag chillin'" or "hashtag are you kidding me." You can see Jimmy Fallon and Justin Timberlake's version of this on YouTube.

Personally, among competing clichés today, I'm pulling for President Joe Biden's "come on, guy" or "here's the deal," which have a kind of nostalgic freshness.

In sum, at the end of the day, we take this seriously because we are all in this together. We will reach out to our stakeholders and circle back to those who have pivoted to the new normal to make clear that going forward we will follow the science with transparency as conditions on the ground permit.

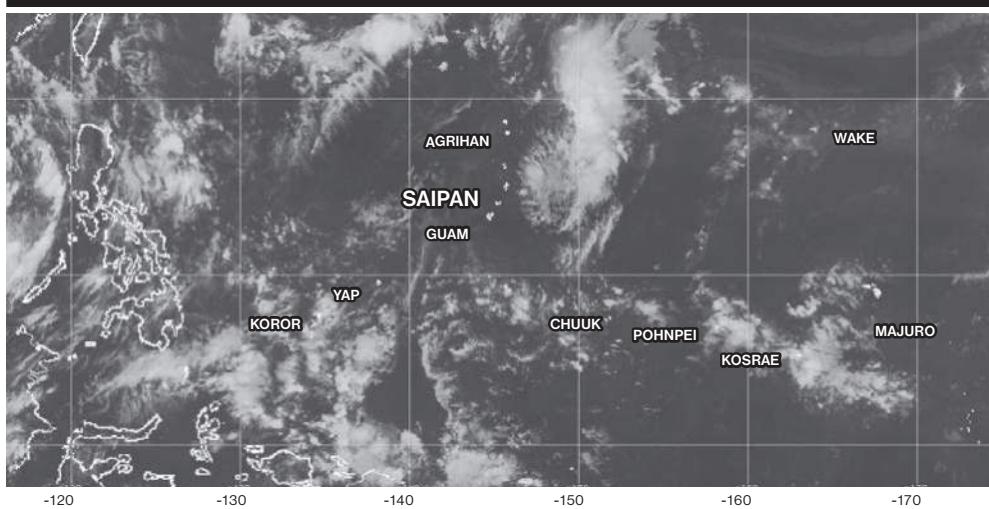
Steve Frank is an attorney, retired after a 35-year career as an appellate lawyer with the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. His guest opinions have appeared in The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune, The Houston Chronicle and Huffington Post, among other publications.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Light and variable winds.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.			
88°	78°	88°	78°	88°
88°	78°	88°	78°	88°
88°	78°	88°	78°	88°
88°	78°	88°	78°	88°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:10 AM, THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Calm conditions are seen across the Marianas with a surface ridge perched east to west over the islands. Similar to yesterday, nearly clear skies were seen over Guam and Rota for sunrise, with a few more clouds and light westerly flow seen at Tinian and Saipan. About 150 miles east of Saipan, heavy showers and thunderstorms have persisted since yesterday in an area of convergent southwesterly winds south of a stationary front. Upper-level winds are also helping to sustain the deep convection and push the thunderstorms westward, ever so slowly, against the low-level flow. Buoys show seas of 2 to 3 feet around the islands.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20

seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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MICRONESIA		
Guam and Rota	Partly cloudy	90 81 °F
Palau	Thunderstorms	85 78 °F
Yap	Partly cloudy	86 73 °F
Chuuk	Partly cloudy	87 81 °F
Pohnpei	Partly cloudy	86 79 °F
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85 80 °F
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85 81 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:46 AM	6:47 PM
Saturday	5:46 AM	6:47 PM
Sunday	5:46 AM	6:47 PM
Monday	5:46 AM	6:47 PM
Tuesday	5:46 AM	6:48 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	6:06 AM	7:31 PM	-
Saturday	6:56 AM	8:23 PM	-
Sunday	7:48 AM	9:13 PM	-
Monday	8:42 AM	10:01 PM	-
Tuesday	9:36 AM	10:47 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		
Auckland	Sunny	58 48 °F
Beijing	Thunderstorms	92 77 °F
Hong Kong	Partly cloudy	89 82 °F
Honolulu	Partly cloudy	84 74 °F
London	Mostly cloudy	67 52 °F
Los Angeles	Mostly sunny	73 59 °F
Manila	Thunderstorms	88 78 °F
Melbourne	Partly cloudy	59 44 °F
Miami	Partly cloudy	85 78 °F
New York	Mostly sunny	82 66 °F
Osaka	Partly cloudy	77 59 °F
Paris	Sunny	74 52 °F
Pusan	Partly cloudy	80 57 °F
Rome	Mostly sunny	86 63 °F
Salem	Cloudy	63 49 °F
San Francisco	Overcast	66 53 °F
Seoul	Partly cloudy	81 61 °F
Tokyo	Sunny	79 64 °F
Washington, DC	Mostly sunny	96 72 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
2:27 AM	Low Tide	1.42
7:00 AM	High Tide	1.90
2:29 PM	Low Tide	-0.08
9:49 PM	High Tide	1.96

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 20, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117 6:30am 7:10am 1, 3, 5, 6,				UA174 4:50am 5:31am 1, 3, 5, 6,			
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183 6:30am 8:50pm 5 via Guam				UA184/174 9:50pm 5:31am+1 5 via Guam			
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183 7:05pm 8:50pm 5				UA184 9:50pm 3:45am+1 5			
UA183 7:15pm 9:10pm 1, 3,				UA184 10:25pm 4:10am+1 1, 3			
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)							
STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.				FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021			
SAIPAN TO ROTA							

Ohala Foundation launches food distribution on Rota

The Ohala Foundation successfully launched its first Rota food distribution program last June 3, with more than 25 volunteers from Rota and Tinian coming together to sort, pack, and distribute the food to more than 300 people at the Eskuelan San Francisco De Borja.

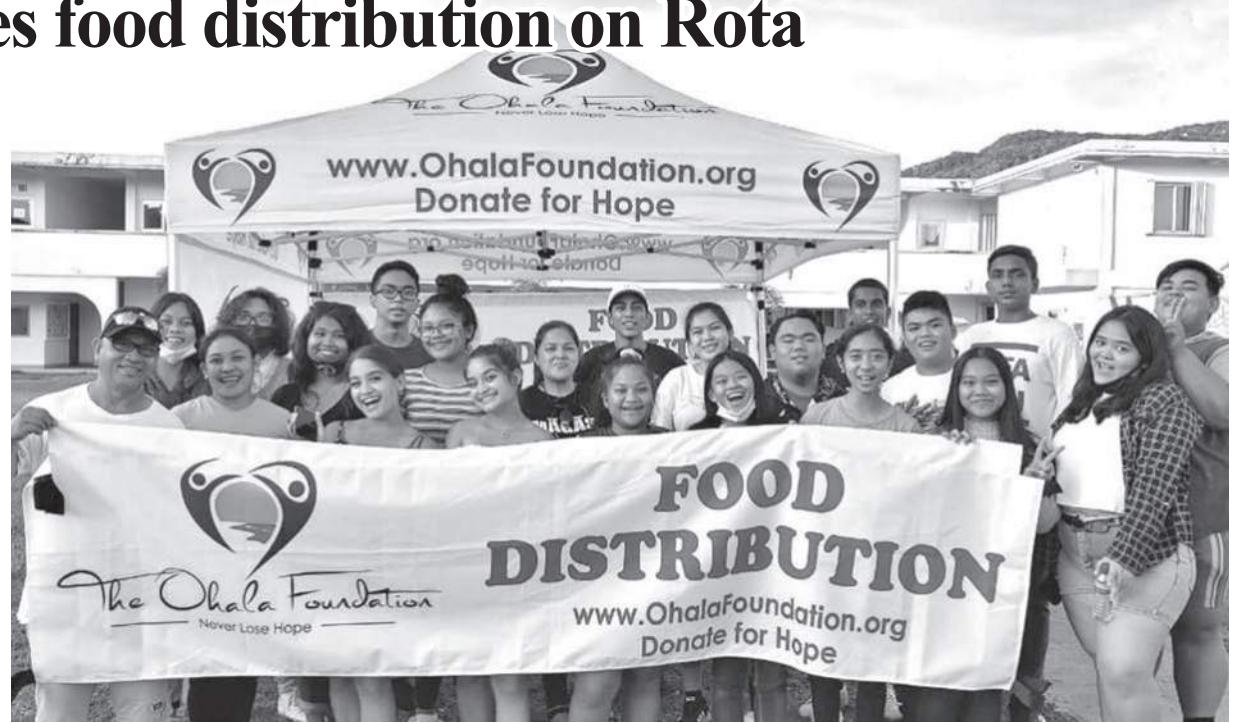
"This is our 16th food drive, and the first to be held on Rota," said Ohala Foundation chair Phillip Mendiola-Long. "The distribution had a huge local impact and we're so happy with the love and support the island of Rota has shown us and we're extremely grateful for the donations from the people and companies [on] Saipan that made it possible for us to collect over 9,000 lbs of food and clothing for our sister island."

He said the event's success has spurred them to raise more funds,

with the intention to get back to Rota to expand the foundation's programs while eventually launching its Saipan programs later this year.

The foundation acknowledges the following individuals and companies for their time and donations: Rota Mayor's Office, Rota Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Fr. Rey Rosal and the Rota Church, captains Ivan Ilmov and Jack Barcina for transporting the goods, Micronesian Brokers Inc., D&Q, Marpac, Herman's Modern Bakery, Yaong Wholesale, Highway Express, Jovita Demapan, Dave Cabrera, Julie Ogo, Marco Pua and the Division of Parks and Recreation.

Interested donors can reach out to the foundation by visiting ohala-foundation.org or by calling (670) 433-2664. (PR)



Ohala Foundation "warriors" from Tinian and Rota work together to distribute Food on Rota,

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TSL Foundation donates gift bags to JKPL

The Tan Siu Lin Foundation donated 152 gift bags to the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library last May 25 to support JKPL's free summer reading program that aims to encourage children, teens, and adults in the CNMI to read and retain their reading skills.

The gift bags—which included a shirt, a stuffed toy, and a mug—will be used for weekly prizes for children who submit completed activi-

ties, most books read, teens for fiction writing, raffle prizes, and more.

"We graciously extend an *un dangkulo na si yuus maáse* to the Tan Siu Lin Foundation for their generous donation of 152 goodie bags filled with awesome swag for the 2021 Joeten-Kiyu Public Library Summer Reading Program Package-to-Go. These prizes will help our children feel proud about their summer reading accomplishments," JKPL library director Erlinda C. Naputi said. The program's theme this year is "Tails and Tales."

Tan Siu Lin Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino said the foundation is honored to be part of a program that is committed to the continued education of com-

munity members, especially the youth.

With the program, students can avoid the "summer slide" or a decline in reading ability and other academic skills that happens when school isn't in session. According to Naputi, children and teens who aren't reading or participating in other learning activities during summer can lose up to two months of academic skills achieved during the school year.

"Children who see their parents and other adults in their lives reading tend to read more and build healthy reading habits. We want our children to achieve their reading goals and feel proud of what they have accomplished. The Summer Reading Program is one



Joeten-Kiyu Public Library staff members pose for a photo with Tan Siu Lin Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino, fifth from left, and assistant manager Raymond Zapanta, leftmost, after receiving the donated gift bags for the JKPL Summer Reading Program Package-to-Go late last month at the TSLF office in Garapan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

way we encourage everyone in the CNMI to value the importance of reading and access to information," Naputi said.

JKPL technical services librarian Beth B. Demapan said the program will be available on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota and is open to the first 300 registered participants by category, with priorities to underserved and underprivileged children.

JKPL launched its Summer Reading Program Package-to-Go last year with the theme "Imagine Your Story." The packages included school supplies, face masks, hand sanitizers, books and learning activities to keep families occupied while avoiding the summer slide. JKPL distributed 1,869 packages-to-go to more than 600 participants on all three islands from July 2020 to August 2020. (PR)

10-year CNMI plan open for public review, comments

The Office of Planning and Development under the CNMI Office of the Governor, in coordination with our Planning and Development Advisory Council, has published the Draft Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan for public review and comment. The CSDP is a strategic plan that aims to provide a roadmap to guide sustainable growth and investment priorities in the CNMI for the next 10 years.

Public meetings are scheduled as follows:

- June 16-17, Tinian
- June 20-21, Saipan and Northern Islands
- June 28-29, Rota

Visit opd.gov.mp/ to verify times and locations. Contact OPD at planning@opd.gov.mp if you have questions or comments and to register to virtually attend. Visit opd.gov.mp/ to learn more about the CSDP and ongoing planning efforts.

The public will have the opportunity to ask questions and submit comments that will be incorporated into the future—and soon to be final—version of the CSDP. (PR)

NOTICE OF REGULAR SHEFA BOARD MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 *et seq.*, as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance (SHEFA) Board is hereby giving notice of its regular board meeting, to be held on June 11, 2021 at 9:30 a.m., Office of SHEFA conference room, 2nd Floor, CTC Building, Oleai, Beach Road, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters

- 1. Call to Order
- 2. Roll Call
- 3. Adoption of agenda
- 4. Adoption of Minutes from May 27, 2021

II. Public Comment (s)

III. Committee Reports

- a. Committee on Awards
- b. Committee on Appeal/Deferments/Forbearance
- c. Committee on Policy and Procedures
- d. Committee on Program and Development
- e. Committee of Fiscal, Legislative and Community Affairs

IV. Administrator's Report

V. Chairman's Report

VI. Old Business

- 1. Election/reorganization of officers
- 2. Loan repayment/collections
- 3. Action: Guam Marianas Training Center

VII. New Business

- 1. Fall 2021 application status

VIII. Executive Session

IX. Miscellaneous Matters

X. Next Meeting

XI. Adjournment

/s/ Francisco D. Cabrera,
Interim Chairman, Board of SHEFA Directors

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY

INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-CHCC/CGC-BHRP-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JUNE 21, 2021 • TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"LEASE OF VEHICLES"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [www.chcc.gov.mp]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/s/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/s/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/CGC-BHRP-002

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JUNE 21, 2021 • TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

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/s/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/s/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/HEMODIALYSIS-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JULY 5TH, 2021 TIME: 10:00PM (CHST)

"DIALYSIS CENTER – HEMODIALYSIS & PERITONEAL DIALYSIS CONSUMABLE/DISPOSABLE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [www.chcc.gov.mp]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/s/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/s/ CORAZON P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

For: Marianas Visitors Authority
TOURISM RESUMPTION INVESTMENT PLAN (TRIP)

MVA-RFP-21-2032 TRIP-AIRLINES
MVA-RFP-21-2033 TRIP-HYBRID QUARANTINE FACILITY
MVA-RFP-21-2034 TRIP-CORRIDOR HOTELS

Submission /Closing Date:
Time:
June 23, 2021
10:00AM (ChST)

Submit sealed proposals to:
Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building
Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861
Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the Scope of Work on or after **June 09, 2021** at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

/s/ Ellsbeth Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Priscilla M. Lakopo
Managing Director, MVA

Business

United, Chase, Visa join forces in support of LGBTQ+ equality

CHICAGO—In celebration and support of Pride Month, United Airlines, Chase and Visa are collaborating to reward United MileagePlus Visa Cardmembers who donate to non-profit LGBTQ+ organizations. Between June 1 and June 30, 2021, eligible United MileagePlus Visa Cardmembers will receive five total miles for every dollar up to \$1,000 in donations per eligible card made to the following organizations:

■ **The Trevor Project:** The world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ+ young people.

■ **The Human Rights Campaign:** An organization that works to create a world where LGBTQ+ people are ensured equality and embraced as full members of society at home, at work and in every community.

■ **StartOut:** A non-profit with a mission to increase the number, diversity and impact of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs and amplify their stories to drive the economic empowerment of the community.

"This Pride Month, United is celebrating our year-round mission of advocating and supporting our LGBTQ+ employees and customers by spotlighting organizations that share our commitment for uplifting the LGBTQ+

community," said Suzi Cabo, United's managing director, global community engagement. "We're proud to partner with Chase and Visa to offer our valued United MileagePlus Visa Cardmembers a special opportunity to give back and earn rewards from us for their contributions."

Customers will receive five total miles per dollar donated from the following cards: United GatewaySM Visa Card, UnitedSM Explorer Visa Card, United QuestSM Visa Card, United ClubSM Infinite Visa Card, United ClubSM Visa Card, UnitedSM Business Visa Card and United ClubSM Business Visa.

United has an ongoing commitment to LGBTQ+ equality which includes a proud history of firsts. United was the first U.S. airline to fully recognize domestic partnerships in 1999 and the first U.S. airline to offer non-binary gender options throughout all its booking channels. United also was the first public company to be inducted into Pride Live's Stonewall Ambassador program in recognition of the airline's commitment to LGBTQ+ equality in 2019. Through EQUAL, the airline's LGBTQ+ Business Resource Group, more than 2,600 members work together to advocate on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community, working



UNITED

Eligible United MileagePlus Visa Cardmembers earn five total miles for every dollar donated to charities supporting the LGBTQ+ community—up to \$1,000 per eligible card United.

ing with members and leaders companywide to develop ways to deliver resources, education and advocacy.

This year, EQUAL designed

United branded Pride merchandise including a special edition enamel pin. Proceeds from sales of the pin will be

donated to Togetheride, the virtual AIDS/LifeCycle event supporting San Francisco AIDS Foundation and the Los

Angeles LGBT Center. The pin and other Pride items are available in the United Shop.

"To celebrate Pride Month, we wanted to reward cardmembers who donate to organizations that serve and advocate for our LBGT+ employees, cardmembers and their families: The Trevor Project, The Human Rights Campaign, and StartOut," said Brad Baumoel, global head of LGBT+ Affairs for JPMorgan Chase. "We are thrilled to join Visa and United to offer miles for donations that support the LBGT+ community."

"Visa believes economies that include everyone, everywhere uplift everyone, everywhere," said Kirk Stuart, senior vice president and head of North America merchant sales and acquiring at Visa. "We are committed to using the power of our network to support the LGBTQ+ community and other diverse populations in their recovery from the global pandemic and beyond. Driving engagement through strategic partnerships is an important part of our strategy to help local communities recover and thrive."

To learn more or to donate to these organizations, customers can visit united.com/pride2021. About Visa, visa.com/blog and @VisaNews. (PR)

Keystone XL pipeline nixed after Biden stands firm on permit

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP)—The sponsor of the Keystone XL crude oil pipeline pulled the plug on the contentious project Wednesday after Canadian officials failed to persuade President Joe Biden to reverse his cancellation of its permit on the day he took office.

Calgary-based TC Energy said it would work with government agencies "to ensure a safe termination of and exit" from the partially built line, which was to transport crude from the oil sand fields of western Canada to Steele City, Nebraska.

Construction on the 1,200-mile (1,930-kilometer) pipeline began last year when former President Donald Trump revived the long-delayed project after it had stalled under the Obama administration. It would have moved up to 830,000 barrels (35 million gallons) of crude daily, connecting in Nebraska to other pipelines that feed oil refineries on the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Biden canceled the pipeline's border crossing permit in January over longstand-

ing concerns that burning oil sands crude could make climate change worse and harder to reverse.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had objected to the move, raising tensions between the U.S. and Canada.

Officials in Alberta, where the line originated, expressed frustration in recent weeks that Trudeau wasn't pushing Biden harder to reinstate the pipeline's permit.

Alberta invested more than \$1 billion in the project last year, kick-starting construction that had stalled amid determined opposition to the line from environmentalists and Native American tribes along its route.

Alberta officials said Wednesday they reached an agreement with TC Energy, formerly known as Trans-Canada, to exit that partnership.

The company and province plan to try to recoup the government's investment, although neither offered any immediate details on how that would happen.

"We remain disappointed and frustrated with the circumstances surrounding the

Keystone XL project, including the cancellation of the presidential permit for the pipeline's border crossing," Alberta Premier Jason Kenney said in a statement.

The province had hoped the pipeline would spur increased development in the oil sands and bring tens of billions of dollars in royalties over decades.

Climate change activists viewed the expansion of oil sands development as an environmental disaster that could speed up global warming as the fuel is burned. That turned Keystone into a flashpoint in the climate debate, and it became the focus of rallies and protests in Washington, D.C., and other cities.

Environmentalists who had fought the project since it was first announced in 2008 said its cancellation marks a "landmark moment" in the effort to curb the use of fossil fuels.

"Good riddance to Keystone XL," said Jared Margolis with the Center for Biological Diversity, one of many environmental groups that sued to stop it.

US drops Trump order targeting TikTok, plans its own review

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House dropped Trump-era executive orders intended to ban the popular apps TikTok and WeChat and will conduct its own review aimed at identifying national security risks with software applications tied to China, officials said Wednesday.

A new executive order directs the Commerce Department to undertake what officials describe as an "evidence-based" analysis of transactions involving apps that are manufactured or supplied or controlled by China. Officials are particularly concerned about apps that collect users' personal data or have connections to Chinese military or intelligence activities.

In revoking some of President Donald Trump's blanket-style orders against Chinese tech companies and replacing them with a narrower approach, the Biden administration has not actually weighed in yet on whether TikTok and other apps pose a danger to Americans.

But a senior administration official said Wednesday that the Trump actions weren't "always implemented in the

soundest fashion" and the aim of the review is to set up clear criteria to evaluate specific data security and privacy risks for each app. He said that could lead to a range of potential future actions on an app-by-app basis.

"We want to take a tailored, tough approach here," he said.

The department will also make recommendations on how to further protect Americans' genetic and personal health information, and will address the risks of certain software apps connected to China or other adversaries, according to senior administration officials.

TikTok on Wednesday declined to comment. WeChat did not respond to a request for comment.

The Trump administration's attempted bans didn't hold up legally as courts blocked them, and also "ran up against this critique that they were mimicking China's Great Firewall," said Samm Sacks, a fellow at Yale Law School's Paul Tsai China Center. "What the Biden administration wants to do is maintain an open, secure internet that doesn't take

a page from Beijing's playbook, while addressing legitimate risk."

The Biden administration's move reflects ongoing concern that Americans' personal data could be exposed by popular apps tied to China, a chief U.S. economic and political rival. The White House and Congress have both taken action to address Beijing's technological advancement.

The Biden administration last week expanded a Trump-era list of Chinese companies that Americans can't invest in because of purported links to the Chinese military and surveillance. Companies on the list include China's state-owned telecommunications companies, telecom equipment maker Huawei and Chinese oil company China National Offshore Oil Corp.

On Tuesday, the Senate passed a bill that aims to boost U.S. semiconductor production and the development of artificial intelligence and other technology in the face of growing international competition. The bill would also ban the federal government's use of Chinese-made drones.

Nation

Legislators, students push for K-12 Asian American studies

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—When the Asian American Student Union at a Connecticut high school organized a Zoom call following the killing of six Asian women in Atlanta, senior Lily Feng thought maybe 10 or 15 classmates would attend. When she logged on, more than 50 people from her school were online. By the call's end, nearly 100 people had joined.

Seeing her peers at Farmington High School turn out for the conversation — one piece of a student-led effort to explore Asian American identity issues—made her realize how much they wanted to listen and learn about a topic that is often absent from the curriculum.

“Our Asian American and Pacific Islander community members, they want their voices to be heard,” said Feng, co-president of the student group that also has brought in speakers, hosted panels and created lessons about Asian American history. “They are almost desperate to be speaking about it. This is so heavy, this is heart-breaking and it was a space for them to really voice that.”

As students push for more inclusive curriculum, some lawmakers, educators and students themselves are working to address gaps in instruction and fight harmful stereotypes by pushing for more Asian



American history to be included in K-12 lesson plans.

Illinois would become the first state to require public schools to teach Asian American studies if the governor signs a bill that cleared the state Legislature. Lawmakers have proposed similar mandates this year in Connecticut, New York and Wisconsin.

Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz, an Illinois representative,

said she sponsored the bill in response to the increasing anti-Asian violence and rhetoric. Growing up, she said she knew little of the discrimination her family had faced in earlier generations because it wasn't taught in school and her family did not openly speak about it.

“I think, like a lot of Asian families, their response to that discrimination was to endure, to survive,” she said. “And that meant moving past it, not talking about it, not educating the next generation about the struggles faced by a first generation.”

It wasn't until law school that Gong-Gershowitz learned

about the Chinese Exclusion Act, an 1882 law that prohibited Chinese workers from immigrating and the only law to exclude a specific ethnicity from entering the country, and the deportation threat it represented for her grandparents. Understanding that history is central to addressing the violence today, she said.

“When people talk about what are we going to do about racism, hate, violence, otherization, my answer is always look at the root cause of that,” she said. “Empathy comes from understanding, and we cannot do better unless we know better.”

On the federal level, U.S. Rep. Grace Meng, D-N.Y., has reintroduced legislation intended to promote teaching Asian American history. The bill would require Presidential and Congressional Academies, which offer history and civics programming to students and teachers, to include Asian American history in their grant applications. It would also encourage state and national assessment tests to include Asian American history.

Asian Americans are largely excluded from textbooks, shown as stereotypes or framed as model minorities, said Nicholas Hartlep, an as-

sociate professor at Berea College in Kentucky who authored a book on those depictions in instructional materials. He said it is encouraging to see the legislation, but funding to support the requirements is necessary for them to make a difference.

“Is that an unfunded mandate where they just say, ‘Yes, it has to be covered?’” Hartlep said. “Or does it come with funding? And what quality assurances do we have for what's being taught? Because if it's just glossing over, that can be equally damaging.”

The growing conversations around anti-Asian hate have also given new urgency to long-running efforts to develop and introduce instructional material for schools that explores Asian American history.

Some educators have taken it upon themselves to fill the content gap.

As public school teachers earlier in their careers, Freda Lin and Cath Golding each saw little of their personal history reflected in the lessons they were teaching unless they designed their own. Now, as co-directors of Project YURI, they provide curriculum and professional development around teaching Asian American history.

Asian Americans are largely excluded from textbooks, shown as stereotypes or framed as model minorities, said Nicholas Hartlep, an as-

San Antonio base locked down for hour after gunfire reported

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—An Air Force base in San Antonio was placed on lockdown for about an hour Wednesday after military officials said gunfire was reported near a base gate.

Two gunshots were reported heard coming from outside Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland onto the base about 11:50 a.m., said Lt. Col. Brian Loveless, 802nd Security Forces Squadron commander. Investigators were trying to determine whether the gunfire report was true or a false alarm, Loveless said.

It was unclear whether anyone saw a shooter or whether more than one shooter may have been involved, he said.

“We're trying to investigate a couple of leads right now to confirm that gunshots actually did take place on the installation.

No injuries were reported, Loveless said.

Lackland is on San Antonio's southeast side and

is where the Air Force conducts all of its basic training.

“There's a lot of facilities on this installation that are very important to the Air Force. I would rather overreact (to a gunfire report) than underreact,” Loveless said.

The base issued an alert midday, telling all Lackland Air Force Base personnel to go into lockdown. An alert on Twitter said: “Real World, LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN.”

Officials said the shots were reportedly fired near the Valley Hi gate on the western side of the main base, just east of Interstate 410 and near a shopping center.

After an hour, the lockdown was lifted except for the Valley Hi gate.

San Antonio police said they were assisting in the investigation. In a statement, police spokeswoman Jennifer Rodriguez said officers were looking for the spot from which gunfire might have originated.

WASHINGTON (AP)—An internal government investigation has determined that the decision to forcibly clear racial justice protesters from an area in front of the White House last summer was not influenced by then-President Donald Trump's plan to stage a Bible-toting photo opportunity at that spot.

The report released Wednesday by the Interior Department's inspector general concludes that the protesters were cleared by U.S. Park Police last June 1 so that a contractor could get started installing new fencing.

The demonstrators were protesting the death of George Floyd, who died after a then-Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck and pinned him to the ground for about 9 1/2 minutes. A half-hour after the Washington protesters were forced from the area with pepper pellets and flash-bangs,

Trump walked across Lafayette Park amid the lingering scent of pepper spray and delivered a short speech while holding a Bible in front of St. John's Church.

Park Police officials had already planned to clear the area and “had begun implementing the operational plan several hours before they knew of a potential Presidential visit to the park,” Inspector General Mark Lee Greenblatt said in a statement accompanying the report.

The report documents Trump's attorney general, William Barr, encouraging commanders shortly before the push to clear the protesters because of Trump, but being dismissed.

In a remarkable exchange, the report recounts the testimony of an unnamed Park Police operations commander: “The Attorney General asked him, ‘Are these people still

going to be here when POTUS (President of the United States) comes out?’ The USPP operations commander told us he had not known until then that the President would be coming out of the White House and into Lafayette Park.

He said he replied to the Attorney General, ‘Are you freaking kidding me?’ and then hung his head and walked away. The Attorney General then left Lafayette Park.”

The report determined that the decision to clear the protesters was justified, but that law enforcement agencies on the scene failed to effectively communicate with each other and failed to communicate warnings to the protesters about the impending crackdown. Several different law enforcement agencies moved ahead of schedule and started engaging with protesters before the protesters had been

sufficiently warned.

The confrontation and church photo-op capped several days of escalating tension and scattered violence. Nights of protests over Floyd's death had resulted in scattered vandalism through the downtown area. Trump declared that Washington's mayor, Muriel Bowser, was incapable of maintaining the peace and he called in his own security response.

The report details how on June 1, a contingent from the Bureau of Prisons arrived to the scene late, didn't receive a full briefing and used pepper pellets on protesters “contrary to the USPP incident commander's instructions.”

The conclusions, which deny any political influence on decisions and cite fog-of-war confusion for any missteps, are likely to be dismissed as insufficient by critics of last summer's crackdown.

Asia

Japan, Australia share China concerns, augment defense ties

TOKYO (AP)—Japan and Australia on Wednesday shared concern about China's increasingly assertive actions in regional seas and expressed strong objections to "coercive or destabilizing" behavior.

Foreign and defense ministers from the two countries agreed in the online talks to strengthen their security ties as China presses its claims to contested areas in the Asia-Pacific region.

Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi told reporters after the talks that the officials shared their concerns about China's activity in the East and South China Seas as a challenge to the international community. Motegi was joined by Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi and their Australian counterparts, Marise Payne and Peter Dutton.

Japan regularly protests to China over its coast guard presence near the Japanese-controlled Senkaku islands, which China also claims and calls Diaoyu. Chinese vessels routinely violate Japanese territorial waters around the islands, sometimes threatening fishing boats, Japanese officials say.

Japan and China are also in dispute over the development of undersea resources in the area.

UN expert says Myanmar attacks risk humanitarian tragedy

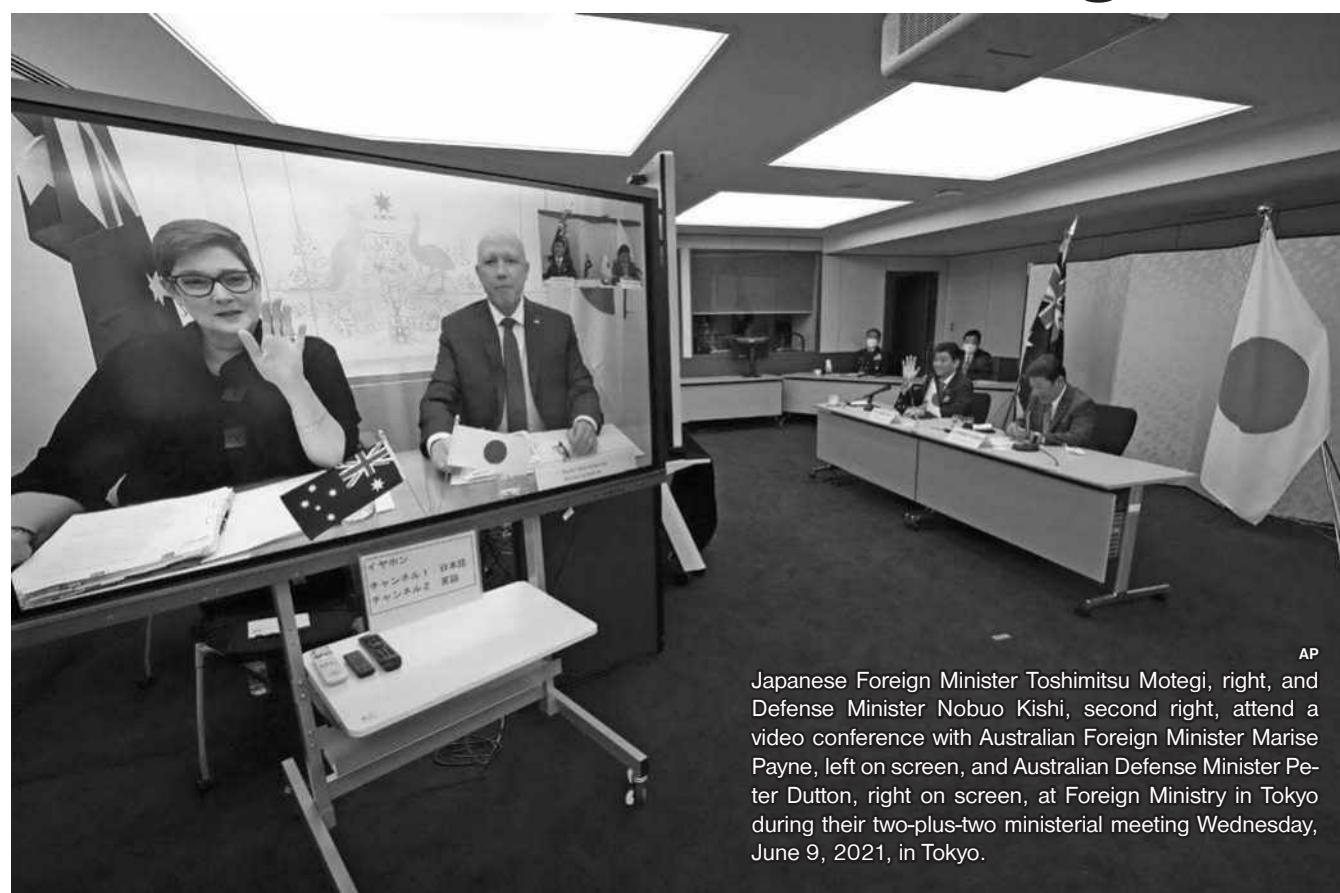
BANGKOK (AP)—At least one-quarter of the people in Myanmar's smallest state have been forced to flee their homes because of combat with the military junta that seized power in February, raising fears of a possible humanitarian tragedy including thousands of civilian deaths, a U.N. expert said Wednesday.

The U.N. special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, called for international pressure on the junta to deprive it of the resources needed "to continue these brutal attacks on the people of Myanmar."

"Mass deaths from starvation, disease and exposure could occur in Kayah state after many of the 100,000 forced to flee into forests from junta bombs are now cut off from food, water and medicine by the junta," he said in remarks posted on Twitter.

Kayah state, also known as Karen state, is in eastern Myanmar along the border with Thailand and has an estimated population of 350,000-400,000.

The U.N.'s office in Myanmar said in a statement Tuesday that people in Kayah are



AP
Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, right, and Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi, second right, attend a video conference with Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne, left on screen, and Australian Defense Minister Peter Dutton, right on screen, at Foreign Ministry in Tokyo during their two-plus-two ministerial meeting Wednesday, June 9, 2021, in Tokyo.

"We reinforce our strong opposition to any destabilizing or coercive unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tension in the East China Sea," Japan and Australia said in a joint statement released after the talks. The behavior "undermines the rules-based international order," they said.

In the South China Sea, China's sweeping territorial claims have clashed with those of its neighbors, which accuse Beijing of militarizing one of the world's busiest sea lanes.

The joint statement expressed "serious concerns about the recent negative developments and serious incidents in the South China Sea, including continuing militarization of disputed features, dangerous use of coast guard vessels and 'maritime militia,' and efforts to disrupt other countries' resources exploitation activities."

"We reaffirmed our strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo" by China, Motegi said. He also added that the four ministers shared "grave concern" over China's human rights abuses in Hong Kong and the western Xinjiang region, where Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities live.

The statement called on China "to grant urgent, meaningful and unfettered access to Xinjiang for independent international observers including the U.N. high commissioner for human rights."

The meeting also reaffirmed the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, where China has recently stepped up a campaign of pressure on the self-ruled island.

China responded that it is determined to defend its sovereignty, security and development interests.

"China has indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea islands and their nearby waters, and over the Diaoyu Island and its affiliated islets," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told a daily briefing in Beijing.

"Issues related to Xinjiang and Hong Kong are China's internal affairs that no foreign country should intervene. China firmly rejects Japan and Australia's efforts to smear China and interfere in China's internal affairs," Wang said.

Japan and Australia are in the final stages of a defense cooperation deal that will allow the Japanese Self-Defense Force to protect Australian military assets, which will be only the second for Japan outside of its alliance with the United States.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Mongolian ruling party seen winning presidency amid pandemic

ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia (AP)—Preliminary results in Mongolia's presidential election show the chairman of the ruling Mongolian People's Party and former prime minister Ukhnaa Khurelsukh winning by a large margin. Wednesday's election was held amid restrictions aimed at containing the largest surge of COVID-19 cases to hit the vast landlocked nation of just 3 million people. The virtually certain win for Khurelsukh would cement his Mongolian People's Party's control over all three major branches of government—a development the opposition says poses a risk to the country's democracy. By midnight, Khurelsukh was leading with 67.9% of the vote, far ahead of former legislator Dangaasuren Enkhbat from the political alliance Right Person Electorate Coalition, who had 20.2%. Enkhbat tested positive for COVID-19 three days before the vote and is hospitalized. Voter turnout was logged at 52.69%, surpassing the required threshold of 50%.

Building collapse in South Korea kills 9, injures 8

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—A five-story building being demolished in southern South Korea collapsed on Wednesday, sending debris falling on a bus and killing nine people on board, officials said. Concrete from the collapsed building in the southern city of Gwangju fell on the bus carrying 17 people which had stopped on a nearby street, the National Fire Agency said. Emergency officers dispatched to the site rescued eight people from the bus, all

seriously injured, before discovering the nine bodies, the agency said in a statement. Fire officer Kim Seok-sun said in a televised briefing from the site that all workers at the building site had evacuated before its collapse. He said some of the workers told investigators that they had closed a pedestrian walkway near the building before the collapse. Fire agency officials said emergency officers were still searching for any other people who might be trapped under the debris. The cause of the collapse wasn't immediately known.

3-story building collapses in India in heavy rain, kills 11

NEW DELHI (AP)—A three-story dilapidated building collapsed following heavy monsoon rains in the western Indian city of Mumbai, killing at least 11 people and injuring seven others, police said Thursday. Dozens of rescuers were clearing the debris to find any residents possibly still trapped, police officer Ravindra Kadam said. Kadam said the building collapsed late Wednesday. Heavy monsoon rains during the day had flooded several parts of the city that is India's financial and entertainment capital. The New Delhi Television channel said the building collapsed onto another structure in a slum in the Malad West area of Mumbai. Residents joined the fire and police officers in rescuing people and they took the seven injured to a hospital in the suburban Kandivali area. Mumbai recorded 222 millimeters (8 inches) of rain in 12 hours. Tidal waves that reached up to 4.6 meters (13 feet) prevented the rainfall from being drained, and roads, rail tracks and neighborhoods were left waterlogged.

World

Biden, Johnson to stress close ties, manage differences

PLYMOUTH, England

(AP)—Their nations may have a famed “special relationship,” but President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will meet for the first time Thursday against a backdrop of differences both political and personal.

Biden hopes to use his first overseas trip as president to reassure European allies that the United States had shed the transactional tendencies of Donald Trump’s term and is a reliable partner again. But tensions may simmer beneath the surface of Biden’s meeting with Johnson.

The president staunchly opposed the Brexit movement, the British exodus from the European Union that Johnson championed, and has expressed great concern with the future of Northern Ireland. And Biden once called the British leader a “physical and emotional clone” of Trump.

The British government has worked hard to overcome that impression, stressing Johnson’s common ground with Biden on issues such as climate change and his support for international institutions. But Johnson, the host for the Group of Seven summit that



will follow his sit-down with Biden, has been frustrated by the lack of a new trade deal with the United States.

But both sides stressed that, publicly, the Biden-Johnson meeting would be about reaffirming ties between longtime allies in a week in which Biden will look to rally the West to re-

buff Russian meddling and publicly demonstrate it can compete economically with China.

National security adviser Jake Sullivan described Biden’s initial calls with Johnson as “warm” and “constructive” and played down any differences between the two nations’ goals.

“They’ve been very much down to business,” Sullivan said at the White House this week. “And I expect that their meeting together will just cover the waterfront. I mean, really, a wide range of issues where the two of them and the U.S and United Kingdom do see eye to eye.”

Biden, who is fiercely proud of his Irish roots, has warned there will be no trade deal if contentious Brexit-related legislation planned by Johnson’s

government undermines Northern Ireland’s 1998 Good Friday peace accord. Some on the British side have viewed Biden warily because of his heritage.

After Brexit, a new arrangement was needed for the border between Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, and Ireland, because the European Union requires certain goods to be inspected and others not to be admitted at all. Ahead of a June 30 deadline, ongoing negotiations

In this April 22, 2021 file photo, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson listens to U.S. President Joe Biden, on screen, during the opening session of the virtual global Leaders Summit on Climate, as he sits in the Downing Street Briefing Room in central London.

over goods—including sausages—have been contentious and have attracted the attention of the White House.

“President Biden has been crystal clear about his rock-solid belief in the Good Friday Agreement as the foundation for peaceful coexistence in Northern Ireland,” Sullivan told reporters aboard Air Force One as Biden flew to England on Wednesday. “Any steps that imperil or undermine it will not be welcomed by the United States.”

The two leaders also were expected to discuss climate change, the coronavirus pandemic, creating an infrastructure financing program for developing countries, Afghanistan and a refresher of the 80-year-old Atlantic Charter between the two nations, Sullivan said.

The new charter will be modeled on the historic joint statement made by Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941 setting out goals for the postwar world.

Grief, outrage after shooting kills pregnant Brazilian woman

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—

Friends and family of a young pregnant woman killed by a stray bullet during a police shootout with alleged criminals in Rio de Janeiro gathered to mourn on Wednesday.

For them and other residents of the Brazilian city, the death of Kathlen Romeu—a Black woman from a working-class neighborhood, or favela—was the all-too-familiar outcome of confrontations between police and traffickers. It generated national media attention and some at the cemetery displayed banners of protest, with demonstrations scheduled for later.

More than 100 people went to the 24-year-old interior designer’s wake and burial, and they crowded into the narrow alleys of the cemetery. Her grandmother was overcome with emotion and had to be carried out. Few were willing to share their thoughts with reporters.

“We just want justice, that’s all,” one friend said through tears. She declined to provide her name.

Rodrigo Deniz, 25, described himself as Romeu’s best friend. “A part of me is

being buried now,” he said.

Rio’s police have said Romeu was hit by a single shot in her torso during a shootout with criminals. Officers brought her to a nearby hospital, but neither she nor her baby survived. Some residents have questioned whether local traffickers even had time to return police gunfire before Romeu was shot. Police have opened three separate investigations into the shootout.

Romeu had a sizeable following on Instagram, where she often shared photos of herself. More recently, she started posting photos of her new pregnancy.

“I’m discovering myself as a mom, and I get scared thinking about how it will be. ... I laugh, cry, and I’m afraid. A mixture of feelings,” she wrote in a post one week ago. “Little one, I feel ready to receive you, love you, care for you!!! God bless us!”

Stray bullets have struck at least six pregnant women in Rio since 2017, but Romeu was the first to die, according to Crossfire, a nongovernmental data project that tracks

Romeu’s neighborhood, Lins de Vasconcelos, suffers frequent shootouts, even during school hours. Luis Pablo Figueiredo, a local community leader who works with kids, said at the cemetery.

“She was our model in the neighborhood: She came from below, started fighting and she made it,” Figueiredo said. “We can’t take it anymore. We just want peace.”

Lins is only a couple miles from the Jacarezinho favela where last month police killed more than two dozen people they alleged were criminals. One of the city’s deadliest-ever police operations, it prompted claims of human rights abuses and days of protest followed.

Mario Braga, senior analyst for risk consultancy Control Risks, said that underfunding of police in Rio means officers often lack preparedness. Shootouts with criminals have proven ineffective over the years, yet the hard-charging method is unlikely to change as long as it appeals to a large portion of voters, he added.

Russian court outlaws opposition leader Navalny’s groups

MOSCOW (AP)—A Moscow court on Wednesday night outlawed the organizations founded by Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny by labeling them extremist, the latest move in a campaign to silence dissent and bar Kremlin critics from running for parliament in September.

The Moscow City Court’s ruling, effective immediately, prevents people associated with Navalny’s Foundation for Fighting Corruption and his sprawling regional network from seeking public office. Many of Navalny’s allies had hoped to run for parliamentary seats in the Sept. 19 election.

The ruling, part of a multipronged Kremlin strategy to steamroll the opposition, sends a tough message one week before President Vladimir Putin holds a summit meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden in Geneva.

The extremism label also carries lengthy prison terms for activists who have worked with the organizations, anyone who donated to them, and even those who simply shared the groups’ materials.

Navalny, Putin’s most ardent political foe, was arrest-

ed in January upon returning from Germany, where he spent five months recovering from a nerve agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin—an accusation that Russian officials reject. In February, Navalny was given a 2 1/2-year prison term for violating the terms of a suspended sentence from a 2014 embezzlement conviction that he dismissed as politically motivated.

In a statement posted on his Instagram account after the verdict, Navalny denounced the hearing as a travesty of justice and vowed to continue defying the Kremlin.

“When corruption is the foundation of the government, fighters against corruption are cast as extremists,” the statement said. “We will not abandon our goals and ideas. It’s our country and we don’t have another one.”

Lawyers said they would appeal the ruling.

Navalny’s offices in dozens of Russian regions already shut down in April after prosecutors issued an injunction to suspend their activities pending the court ruling, but the opposition leader’s associates have vowed to continue their work in different formats.

Off The Wall

China's wandering elephants becoming international stars

BEIJING (AP)—Already famous at home, China's wandering elephants are now becoming international stars.

Major global media are chronicling the herd's more than yearlong, 500-kilometer (300-mile) trek from their home in a wildlife reserve in mountainous southwest Yunnan province to the outskirts of the provincial capital of Kunming.

Twitter and YouTube are full of clips of their various antics, particularly those of two calves who slipped into an irrigation ditch and had to be helped out by older members of the group.

"We should be more like the elephant and be more family oriented, take family vacations and help and care for and protect each other," read one comment on YouTube signed MrDeterministicchaos.

The elephants have been trending for days on China's Weibo microblogging service with photos of the group sleeping attracting 25,000 posts and 200 million views Monday night.

The 15-member herd has been caught at night trotting down urban streets by security cameras, filmed constantly from the air by more than a dozen drones and followed by those seeking to minimize damage and keep both pachyderms and people out of harm's way.

They've raided farms for food and water, visited a car dealer-



(YUNNAN FOREST FIRE BRIGADE VIA AP)

In this aerial photo taken June 7, 2021 and released by the Yunnan Forest Fire Brigade, a migrating herd of elephants rests near Xinyang Township in Jinning District of Kunming city in southwestern China's Yunnan Province.

ship and even showed up at a retirement home, where they poked their trunks into some of the rooms, prompting one elderly man to hide under his bed.

While no animals or people have been hurt, reports put damage to crops at more than \$1 million.

Sixteen animals were originally in the group, but the government says two returned home and a baby was born during the walk. The herd is now composed of six female and three male adults, three juveniles and three calves, according to official reports.

What exactly motivated them to make the epic journey remains a mystery, although they appear to be especially attracted to corn, tropical fruit and other crops that are tasty, plentiful and easy to obtain in

the lush tropical region that is home to about 300 of the animals. Others have speculated their leader may be simply lost.

Asian elephants are loyal to their home ranges unless there have been disturbances, loss of resources or development, in which case they may move out, according to Nilanga Jayasinghe, manager for Asian species conservation at the World Wildlife Fund.

"In this case, we don't really know why they left their home range, but do know that there has been significant habitat loss due to agriculture and conversion of forests into plantations within that range in the last few decades," Jayasinghe wrote in an email. "What possibly happened here is that in their search for new habitat, they got lost along the way and kept going."

to chat since the city's guidelines changed so for the time being, they're "going to stick with our initial mask guidance." Lead organizer Wesley Noonan-Sessa said they'll keep an eye on what the city says in the next month or so.

Ride participants, sometimes in the thousands, usually gather in a park to strip off their clothes and paint each other's bodies before carefully hopping on their bikes. The naked ride is to promote positive body image, advo-

cate for the safety of cyclists and protest dependence on fossil fuels.

Riders pedal a 10-mile (16-kilometer) course while taking in sights including Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell and the Philadelphia Museum of Art's steps, featured in the "Rocky" movies.

The coronavirus pandemic slammed the brakes on the ride that had been planned for last year. Organizers said then that canceling the 2020 event was "the most responsible thing to do."

Only mask needed for nude bike ride

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Philadelphia bike riders won't need their shirts, pants, skirts or even underwear—just a mask.

Organizers of the annual Philly Naked Bike Ride say this year's event will take place Aug. 28 and will require masks, based on the city's earlier coronavirus restrictions.

The city lifted most of its COVID-19 rules this week, citing an increase in vaccinations and a decrease in cases. But ride organizers said they hadn't had a chance

Dog caught on video giving rodent a ride

LUNENBURG, Mass. (AP)—Wally the golden retriever did exactly what his breed is supposed to do during a recent swim in a Massachusetts lake, retrieving a small rodent and giving it a ride to shore on his back before ending the trip with a little kiss—an interaction all caught on video by Wally's owner.

Lauren Russell was at

Hickory Hills Lake in Lunenburg with Wally last month when he came across what appeared to be a woodchuck in the water, she told WCVB-TV on Monday.

"He was about 100 meters out and a woodchuck, I think, just crawled right up on his back and he swam back to shore with him," Russell said.

When they got close to shore, the dog and rodent gave each other a kiss before parting ways.

"They like touched snouts and then he ran away," Russell said.

Science & Technology

'There is stuff': Mysteries follow US report on UFOs

WASHINGTON (AP)—

The blob, captured on distant, fuzzy video by Navy pilots, seems to skitter just above the ocean waves at improbable speed, with no discernible means of propulsion or lift. "Oh my gosh, man," one aviator says to another as they laugh at the oddity. "What ... is it?"

Is it a bird? A plane? Super drone? An extraterrestrial something?

The U.S. government has been taking a hard look at unidentified flying objects like this one. A report summarizing what the U.S. knows about "unidentified aerial phenomena"—better known as UFOs—is expected to be made public this month.

There won't be an alien unmasking. Two officials briefed on the report say it found no extraterrestrial link to the sightings reported and captured on video. The report won't rule out a link to another country, according to the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss it.

While the broad conclusions have now been reported, the full report may still present a broader picture of what the government knows. The anticipation surrounding the report shows how a topic normally confined to science fiction and a small, often dismissed group of researchers has hit the mainstream.

Worried about national security threats from adversaries, lawmakers ordered an investigation and public accounting of phenomena that the government has been loath to talk about for generations.

"There is stuff flying in our airspace," Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, one of the senators who pressed for the probe, recently told Fox News. "We don't know what it is. We need to find out."

Congress late last year instructed the director of national intelligence to provide "a detailed analysis of unidentified aerial phenomena data" from multiple agencies and report in 180 days. That time is about up. The intelligence office wouldn't say this past week when the full document will be out.

The bill passed by Congress asks the intelligence



The image from video provided by the Department of Defense labelled Gimbal, from 2015, an unexplained object is seen at center as it is tracked as it soars high along the clouds, traveling against the wind. "There's a whole fleet of them," one naval aviator tells another, though only one indistinct object is shown. "It's rotating."

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE VIA AP

director for "any incidents or patterns that indicate a potential adversary may have achieved breakthrough aerospace capabilities that could put United States strategic or conventional forces at risk."

The chief concern is whether hostile countries are fielding aerial technology so advanced and weird that it befuddles and threatens the world's largest military power. But when lawmakers talk about it, they tend to leave themselves a little wiggle room in case it's something else—whether more prosaic than a military rival or, you know, more cosmic.

"Right now there are a lot of unanswered questions," Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff of California told NBC this week. "If other nations have capabilities that we don't know of, we want to find out. If there's some explanation other than that, we want to learn that, too."

Luis Elizondo, former head of the Pentagon's Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program, said he didn't believe that the sightings were of a foreign power's technology in part because it would have been nearly impossible to keep that secret. Elizondo has accused the Defense Department of trying to discredit him and says there's much more information that the U.S. has kept classified.

"We live in an incredible universe," Elizondo said. "There's all sorts of hypothe-

ses that suggest that the three dimensional universe which we live in isn't quite so easy to explain."

But Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, is skeptical.

The science historian, a longtime analyst of UFO theories and other phenomena, said he's seen too many blurry images of supposed alien encounters to be convinced by still more blurry footage of blobs from airplanes. This is a time, he notes, when several billion people worldwide have smartphones that take crisp images and satellites precisely render detail on the ground.

"Show me the body, show me the spacecraft, or show me the really high quality videos and photographs," he said in an interview. "And I'll believe."

Mick West, a prominent researcher of unexplained phenomena and debunker of conspiracy theories, said it was right for the government to investigate and report on the potential national security implications of sightings captured in now-declassified videos.

"Any time there is some kind of unidentified object coming through military airspace, that's a real issue that needs to be looked into," he told AP.

"But the videos, even though they're showing unidentified objects, they're not showing amazing unidentified objects."

Life & Style

Underwood wins at CMT Awards; Gladys Knight, H.E.R. perform

NEW YORK (AP)—Carrie Underwood has another reason to rejoice—she extended her record as the most decorated artist in the history of the CMT Music Awards, thanks to her song "Hallelujah."

The music video for the singer's hit, a collaboration with John Legend, was named video of the year at Wednesday's show, which aired from Nashville, Tennessee.

Underwood, who now has

Rapors, twists and drops on Universal's new Jurassic ride

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—The creators of the Jurassic World VelociCoaster roller coaster at Universal Orlando Resort had more to contend with than just encounters with rabid raptors.

They faced a global pandemic that shut down the theme park resort for weeks last year and kept visitors at bay when it reopened last summer.

Now, the roller coaster opens to the public on Thursday at the resort's Islands of Adventure park, becoming the first major ride to debut at the theme park mecca of central

Florida since last year's virus-inspired closings.

The ride features actors from the Jurassic Park movies recreating their roles, including Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard and B.D. Wong.

The ride has two launches, four inversions, a 360-degree barrel roll above a lagoon, an inverted zero-gravity stall that sends riders upside down across 100 feet (30 meters) of track and a 155-foot (47-meter) ascent with a 140-foot (42-meter) drop at eighty degrees.



The new Jurassic World VelociCoaster takes a test run during a media preview at Universal Studios theme park Wednesday, June 9, 2021, in Orlando, Fla. AP

DEAR ABBY: Twenty years ago, I reconnected with a childhood friend. When we were in high school together, she used to love telling stories, not all of them true. Most were harmless and cast her as the center of an interesting adventure.

After graduation, I headed off to college, she started a job and we lost touch for almost 30 years. We now see each other once or twice a year, but text almost daily.

She recently sent me a photo of a now-closed department store and told me she had worked there right after high school, in its pet department. She went on to say she got the job because she had raised tropical fish and was comfortable caring for the animals. The problem with her story is that it was I who had that job. I worked there throughout my freshman year in college.

Thinking maybe she had taken the job after I left, I asked a few questions. But it quickly became obvious that she had snatched my work experience as her own. I couldn't think of a kind way to challenge her, so all I texted was "Interesting." Now I find myself not believing any of her stories. I don't think she has dementia, but I can't understand why anyone would co-opt someone else's history like this. Should I challenge her at this late date or chalk it up to more of her "storytelling"?

STOLEN LIFE IN INDIANA

DEAR STOLEN: For whatever reason, your old chum

23 CMT Awards, thanked her die-hard fans while accepting the honor: "You're the reason we're all here doing what we do, doing what we love (and) making music videos."

She also shouted-out Legend, particularly for sending her the song, which appeared on her first holiday album "My Gift."

"Congratulations on what I think is your first CMT Award. Whoa!" she exclaimed.

Though Underwood owned part of the night—she also performed with rock band NEEDTOBREATHE—other female stars, some outside of country music, took over the awards show honoring the year's best country music videos.

Grammy-winning R&B star H.E.R. and fellow guitar slayer Chris Stapleton had the night's best performance. They joined forces for a smoky, thrilling performance of "Hold On," coming off like a veteran duo.

The legendary Gladys Knight won over audience members—not wearing masks—during a performance of "Friendship Train" with Mickey Guyton. Part of the show felt dedicated to Black female voices thanks to the

top notch performances by Knight, H.E.R. and Guyton, who was nominated for two awards and presented the CMT Equal Play Award to Linda Martell, one of the pioneering Black acts in country music and the first Black woman to perform solo at the Grand Ole Opry.

Martell had a country hit with the song "Color Me Country" 50 years ago, and she had other songs reach the charts, but she dealt with major hardships. She experienced racism while performing onstage and was shunned by the music industry as a mainstream country performer. Her record label shelved her album and she was prohibited from finding a new deal.

"Hearing Linda sing makes

it very clear that she had all the talent to be a huge star but her career was cut short for one reason: the color of her skin," said Guyton, who made history this year as the first solo Black woman nominated for a country Grammy Award.

"I would not be standing here today without you, and none of us would be here without you, so thank you!"

Martell, 86, didn't attend the awards show but CMT aired photos of the icon holding her award and said she was watching the show from her home in South Carolina.

Guyton also hit the stage with BRELAND, the Black singer who has mixed country, trap and R&B music and had a country hit with the platinum

success "My Truck."

And the night featured more collaborative performances like it.

Lady A kicked off the show with Carly Pearce and Lindsay Ell, Ingrid Andress sang with pop singer-songwriter JP Saxe, while Miranda Lambert performed with Jack Ingram and Jon Randall.

Hosts Kane Brown and Kelsea Ballerini also performed onstage and won awards.

Brown won male video of the year for "Worship You" and collaborative video of the year for "Famous Friends" with Chris Young. CMT performance of the year went to Ballerini and Halsey's "The Other Girl" from the 2020 CMT Music Awards.

UK: Queen marks late husband's 100th birthday with new rose

LONDON (AP)—Queen Elizabeth II has marked what would have been her husband Prince Philip's 100th birthday with the planting of a newly bred rose named after him.

The monarch watched the Duke of Edinburgh Rose planted in the Windsor Castle gardens last week to commemorate Philip's centenary Thursday.

She was pictured smiling as she accepted the small rose bush, wrapped in brown paper and twine, from the Royal Horticultural Society's president.

The rose, which is deep pink and dappled with white lines, was newly bred following Philip's death on April 9 at Windsor Castle.

For every rose sold, the

company Harkness Roses will donate 2.50 pounds (\$3.50) to a fund aiming to help a million more young people from all backgrounds take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, a popular youth award program set up by Philip in 1956.

Philip, who was born on the Greek island of Corfu on June 10, 1921, married then-Princess Elizabeth in 1947—five years before she became queen at age 25. Their marriage lasted 73 years, making Philip Britain's longest-serving consort. The queen has called her husband her "strength and stay" in public.

He devoted his life to royal service, taking on tens of thousands of engagements



Britain's Queen Elizabeth II receives a Duke of Edinburgh rose, given to her by Keith Weed, president of the Royal Horticultural Society, at Windsor Castle, England, Wednesday June 9, 2021. AP

and accompanying the queen on official visits to some 140 countries. He retired from royal duties in 2017, at age 96.

Friend prefers telling tall tales over the truth

seems unable to separate fact from fantasy. She may do this because she has low self-esteem. I see nothing positive to be gained by confronting her, but it may be time to ask yourself how much you want to continue a relationship with a compulsive fabulist. She may do this hoping to impress others, or because she feels her life is so boring that others won't be interested in her if she tells the truth. It's sad, really.

DEAR ABBY: My husband of many years died. We were very close and spent a lot of time together. How do I graciously decline visits from people I care about but am not close to? I know they mean well, and I don't want to cause hurt feelings. I think we may all grieve differently. Even after several months, I'm still not ready to entertain a visitor. I may never be, although I appreciate their thoughts.

CONTINUING TO GRIEVE

DEAR CONTINUING: When you wrote that everyone grieves differently, you nailed it. It's the truth. For some, the process can take a short time. (Many widows and widowers had time to grieve before they lost their spouses.) For others, it takes longer. Several months is still a relatively short time, but please do not isolate yourself completely. You don't have to entertain, but being able to vent your feelings to caring friends or in a support group can be

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



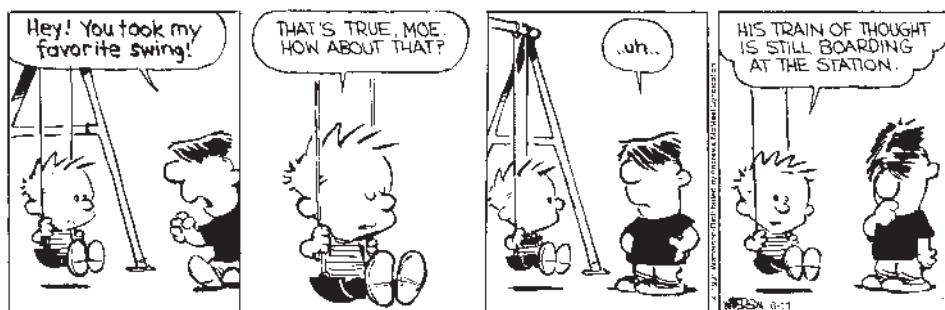
healthy and healing.

If you don't want anyone in your home, consider meeting a close friend or two out in public for a brief visit. Going out, exercising and getting some sunshine each day is healthy and can help to lessen depression. Your husband is irreplaceable, but isolating yourself won't bring him back. If your inability to move forward persists, I urge you to discuss it with your physician or your religious adviser if you have one.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

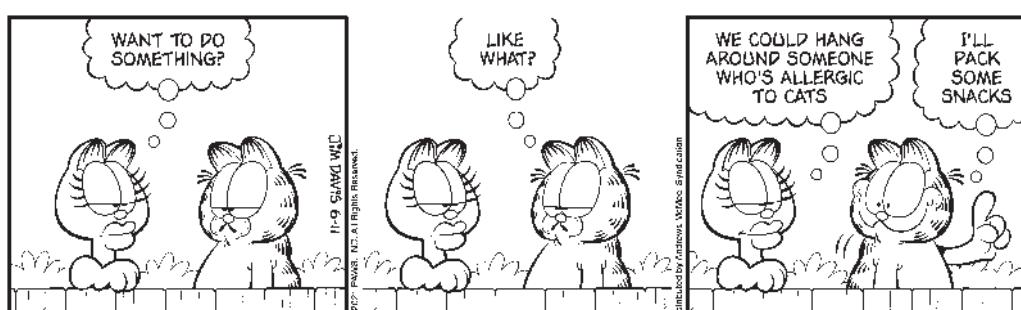
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Waterson

Garfield®



By Jim Davis

Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

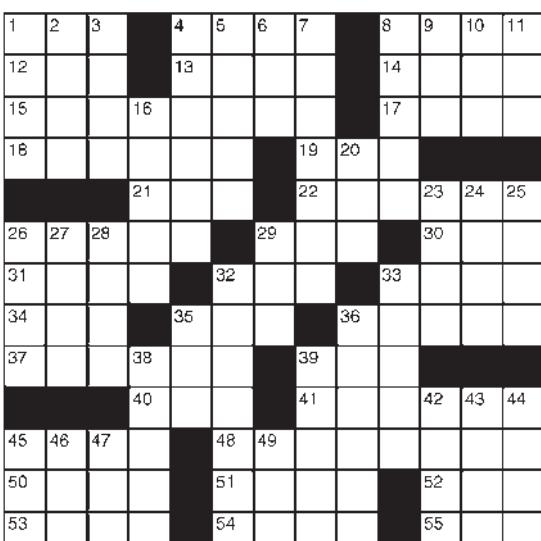
CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	37	Did a valet's job	2	"... sting like —"	24	Out of control	
1	JFK regulator	39	That girl	3	Outlet letters	25	Sicilian volcano
4	Couturier Christian	40	Attorney's profession	4	NFL city	26	Envelope part
8	Help a hood	41	Tertiary Period	5	Patsy Cline's "— to Pieces"	27	Volcanic flow
12	Alphabet starter	45	Bean curd	6	Assoc.	28	River to the Baltic
13	Roundish do	48	Type of light	7	Snow White's sister	29	Wild bunch
14	Like ganders	50	Homer's son	8	Surrounded by	32	Merlot, for one
15	Danger signs	51	Terse denial	9	Prohibit	33	Poet Federico Garcia —
17	Cameo stone	52	Predetermine	10	TV Tarzan	35	Narc's agcy.
18	Bring to mind	53	N. Mex. neighbor	11	Cowboy's nickname	36	Illinois city
19	Ages and ages	54	New Age singer	12	Notorious	38	Clumsy one
21	— de mer	55	Devious	13	DOWN British ref. work	39	Substantial
22	Bob Marley's music	14	Klinger portrayer	15	1 Klenger	42	Messes up
25	Arctic sheets	16	portray	17	20 Earth sci.	43	Astronaut Armstrong
29	Club —	18		18	1 Klinger	44	Jittery
30	911 responder	19		19	20 British ref. work	45	TV schedule abbr.
31	"Shane" star Alan	20		20	21 Earth sci.	46	Scull tool
32	Scepter	21		21	22 Earth sci.	47	Thurs. follower
33	Lake bird	22		22	23 Earth sci.	48	Dijon denial
34	"Hail!"	23		23	24 Earth sci.		
35	Society newbie	24		24	25 Earth sci.		
36	Oktobefest dance	25		25	26 Earth sci.		

Solution time: 25 mins.

 Yesterday's answer 6-11



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Brenna Yde, 18; Shia LaBeouf, 35; Peter Dinklage, 52; Hugh Laurie, 62.

Happy Birthday: Do things your way this year. Refuse to let someone step in and take over. Have a plan in mind and a schedule in place. Leave nothing to chance or open for criticism. Use your intelligence to navigate your way to victory. Face challenges head-on, and don't lose sight of the big picture. Get in the game and play to win. Embrace life. Your numbers are 8, 13, 20, 29, 33, 37, 48.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll gain perspective regarding what's possible and what isn't. A change in direction looks promising. Reach out to someone who can offer sound advice or an introduction that will help you get ahead. Verify information before you pass it along. **★★★**

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Reach out to people you feel can assist you in reaching your goal. A personal change will lift your spirits and give you the confidence you need to take on a new challenge. Love is featured and will enhance your life. **★★★★**

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Do what you do best. Own the stage instead of letting others crowd your space. It's time to embrace what you enjoy doing most and take on a leadership role. Think big, but live within your means. Maintain balance. **★★★**

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Look for the silver lining in any situation you face; you'll find a way to parlay it into something valuable. A physical change you make or an

image update will result in positive attention from someone special. Romance is featured. **★★★**

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Pay attention. Observe what others are doing. Don't rely on others to do things for you. Invest time and money in yourself. Put more effort into the way you look and upgrading your qualifications. Attend a virtual networking function. 3 stars

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Display what you have to offer, and interest will grow. Making a move in a new and exciting direction will give you the boost you need to resurrect something you enjoy doing. A twist of fate will lead to new beginnings. **★★★★**

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Keep gathering information. Being tech-savvy and knowing what's possible will give you the advantage you need to avoid getting involved in a risky venture. Control how you handle situations, people and money. Don't let temptation disrupt your life. **★★**

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Expand your interests, knowledge and flexibility. Take precautions to ensure you stay healthy and fit. Put your energy into educational pursuits, lectures and hot topics about money management. Make adjustments to lopsided relationships. Equality will lead to respect. **★★★★★**

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your emotions will lead you in one direction and your common sense in another. Verify the information you receive. Stick to the guidelines suggested when dealing with financial, health or legal matters. Handle partnerships carefully. **★★★★**

Birthday Baby: You are creative, sensitive and loving. You are curious and optimistic.

Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. **★★**: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. **★★★**: Focus and you'll reach your goals. **★★★★**: Aim high; start new projects.

★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.



EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COURTESY 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You'll gravitate toward situations that are unique, sensitive and changeable. Be open regarding your feelings, and ask questions if someone's response is confusing. A direct approach will help you decide your next move. Romance is on the rise. **★★★**

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Put your money, time and effort into building a solid home base. How you deal with those you live with will determine how much you achieve. Set your standards and goals high, and don't stop until you are happy with the results. **★★★★★**

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Safe socializing and networking are favored as long as they don't subject you or your loved ones to unpredictable situations. Contact someone who shows interest in the unique way you do things. A change in direction looks promising. **★★**

Birthday Baby: You are creative, sensitive and loving. You are curious and optimistic.

Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. **★★**: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. **★★★**: Focus and you'll reach your goals. **★★★★**: Aim high; start new projects.

★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	8	2		4				
5			7	1		8		
	6				2			
	7		8			2		
6					5			
2		5			9			
	4			6				
3		4	2			9		
	9		5	3				

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	6	1	2	5	8	3	4	9
3	2	4	9	6	1	7	5	8
5	8	9	7	4	3	6	1	2
1	3	8	4	7	2	5	9	6
2	9	6	8	3	5	1	7	4
4	7	5	1	9	6	8	2	3
6	1	7	3	2	4	9	8	5
8	5	2	6	1	9	4	3	7
9	4	3	5	8	7	2	6	1

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

WALTER MONDALE (1928-2021)

Solution: 9 letters

E	I	T	N	E	D	I	S	R	P	E	C	I	V
O	L	E	S	T	E	R	L	U	N	C	H	E	S
F	R	E	D	E	R	I	C	K	N	N	H	T	T
F	S	C	A	T	E	R	A	S	V	C	P	A	E
I	D	E	O	N	Y	J	N	T	O	A	R	N	L
C	R	R	T	L	Q	I	I	Y	E	I	E	A	U
E	O	U	O	A	F	R	I	T	Z	D	U	R	N
L	D	N	N	D	G	T							

Chris Paul has another big night, Suns rout Nuggets

PHOENIX (AP)—Chris Paul is a 36-year-old man who can still put together an NBA point guard's version of a virtuoso performance: Fifteen assists, no turnovers and it led to another blowout playoff victory for his rolling Phoenix Suns.

"I feel good," Paul said. "I feel really good."

Apparently so.

The ageless Paul added 17 points, Devin Booker had 18 points and 10 rebounds and Phoenix routed the Denver Nuggets 123-98 on Wednesday night to take a 2-0 lead in the Western Conference semifinals.

Deandre Ayton had 15 points and 10 rebounds, and Mikal Bridges added 16 points for the balanced Suns in their fifth straight victory.

Paul was particularly impressive and it appears his ailing right shoulder—which greatly limited his play against the Los Angeles Lakers in the first round—isn't much of a problem anymore. The 11-time All-Star had 21 points and 11 assists in Game 1.

Nikola Jokic had 24 points



AP
Phoenix Suns guard Chris Paul (3) is defended by Denver Nuggets guard Facundo Campazzo during the first half of Game 2 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series, Wednesday, June 9, 2021, in Phoenix.

and 13 rebounds for Denver, a day after getting the NBA's Most Valuable Player award. But the Nuggets couldn't find anyone else to score consistently, leaving them reeling

going back to Denver for Game 3 on Friday night.

"This was an embarrassing performance for myself all the way to the last player," Denver coach Michael Malone said. "We are walking out here with our heads held down and rightfully so. There was a reason that their crowd was yelling 'Suns in four!' and they are calling for a sweep because if we play like this in Denver, this is going to be a really quick series."

Later, Malone added he

felt the Nuggets "quit tonight, which is something that you never want to see."

Said Jokic: "They are playing better than us. They are making shots, being more aggressive, finding the open man. It looks real bad out there. We need to change everything."

The Suns had a 10-point halftime lead and Jae Crowder added a pair of 3-pointers early in the third to make it 60-43. Phoenix took an 86-67 advantage into the fourth. The Suns led by 31 in the final quarter

as they relentlessly pushed the ball even as the lead built.

"It's the NBA—crazy things can happen no matter how big of a lead you have," Suns forward Torrey Craig said.

Crowder had another good night as the Suns' long-range shooter and enforcer. He and Denver's Aaron Gordon were each called for a technical foul after they exchanged words and shoves midway through the third. On the next possession, Crowder coaxed Gordon into committing an offensive

foul, much to the delight of the 16,529 at Phoenix Suns Arena.

"It was one of our better defensive halves of the year against a good offensive team," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "We were relentless with our effort, our communication and coverages."

Crowder said he isn't seeking to be the team's enforcer but the moments keep finding him. He joked that he's already given to much money to the NBA in the form of fines during this postseason.

"I got to be smart and protect my money a little," he added grinning.

Paul pushed the sellout crowd into a frenzy in the fourth, throwing his 15th assist to Craig after criss-crossing around helpless Denver forward Paul Millsap. Paul then hit a pair of 3-pointers and the celebration was on in the desert with the Suns rolling in their first playoff appearance in 11 seasons.

"It got a little loud, then it got really loud, then it got crazy," Paul said

Phoenix took a 52-42 half-time lead after a sloppy first half where both teams struggled to generate offense. Denver was shaky with its long range shooting, making just 1 of 13 3-pointers in the first quarter.

Booker had 13 points before the break. Jokic countered with 15 points.

Utah's Gobert wins third Defensive Player of the Year award



AP
Utah Jazz's Rudy Gobert (27) and Royce O'Neale (23) defend against Los Angeles Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard, center, during the first half of Game 1 of a second-round NBA basketball playoff series Tuesday, June 8, 2021, in Salt Lake City.

NBA BRIEFS

Pacers fire Bjorkgren as coach after just 1 season

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Kevin Pritchard hired Nate Bjorkgren to take the Indiana Pacers in a new direction. They went the wrong way. A season filled with defensive struggles, missed chances and locker room drama resulted Wednesday in the firing of Bjorkgren after only one season as coach. "This was my decision," said Pritchard, the Pacers' president of basketball operations. "This was a really tough decision, one that had a lot of thought behind it. I brought in my management team, something we didn't do lightly." Pritchard expected the 45-year-old coach, who spent the previous two seasons as Nick Nurse's top assistant in Toronto, to make an impact with his new-age approach and his creativity. When the hiring was announced in October, Pritchard acknowledged he was betting big on a young coach. It just didn't pay off. Indiana went 34-38 before finishing the season with an embarrassing 142-115 loss to Washington in the play-in tournament — a fitting end to an abysmal season.

The Wizards averaged 140.3 points in sweeping four games from the Pacers. Indiana finished 25th in defensive scoring average (115.3 points), blew 17 fourth-quarter leads and produced its first losing record at home

in 32 seasons. Sure, injuries played a part in the results. Indiana's top scorer from 2019-20, T.J. Warren, suffered a season-ending foot injury after playing just four games. NBA blocks champion Myles Turner went down with a season-ending foot injury on April 18. And after trading two-time All-Star Victor Oladipo for swing-man Caris LeVert in January, LeVert missed the next 24 games because team doctors found a cancerous growth on his left kidney.

Heat's Riley fined \$25,000 for remarks about a LeBron return

NEW YORK (AP)—Miami Heat President Pat Riley was fined \$25,000 by the NBA on Wednesday for being too clear that he'd eagerly welcome a reunion with LeBron James. The league said Riley violated its anti-tampering rule with his remarks during an interview

Friday on Dan Le Batard's radio show. Riley said he would "leave the key under the doormat" if James called and said he wanted to return to Miami. James led the Heat to two NBA titles and four straight appearances in the finals before returning to Cleveland in 2014. Riley is the second executive to be fined in three days for tampering. The NBA penalized Philadelphia's Daryl Morey and the team \$75,000 apiece on Monday for a tweet about Stephen Curry.

"I thought about it last night because I knew that I probably would have got a text after the game," Gobert said.

"I'm sure he's very proud and I'm going to try to keep making him proud and keep honoring his legacy."

Gobert had the most total blocked shots and defensive rebounds in the league this season and became the fourth player to win the award at least three times after leading the Jazz to the best record in the league.

A night after a game-sealing blocked shot in Game 1 of the Western Conference semifinals, Gobert received 84 first-place votes and 464 points from a global panel of 100 sportswriters and broadcasters.

Philadelphia's Ben Simmons was second with 15 first-place votes and 287 votes, while Draymond Green of Golden State was third with 76 points.

Gobert was the Defensive Player of the Year in 2018 and 2019. Dikembe Mutombo and Ben Wallace each won it four times and Dwight Howard three.

With Gobert in the middle, the Jazz went 52-20 and earned the overall No. 1 seed for the first time. They limited teams to 44.7% shooting, second-lowest in the league.

As more teams turn to

smaller lineups and shoot from further away from the basket, it's tougher for traditional centers to stay on the floor. Gobert welcomes the challenge. "For me it's really been about getting better every single year and teams have been trying to negate my impact one way or another every single year," Gobert said. "So I had to raise my level year after year and day after day to be able to try to keep dominating on that end."

Miami's Bam Adebayo earned the other first-place vote and finished fourth. Giannis Antetokounmpo round-

ed out the top five.

Antetokounmpo ended Gobert's reign last year during a disappointing finish to the season for the native of France. Gobert's positive test for the coronavirus triggered the NBA's shutdown in March, and after play resumed the Jazz blew a 3-1 lead in the first round against Denver.

But the Jazz powered through this season and took Game 1 in the second round against the Los Angeles Clippers on Tuesday when Gobert blocked Marcus Morris' 3-point attempt to preserve a 112-109 victory.

Gobert averaged 14.3 points and 13.5 rebounds, tying a career high, in 71 games. His 2.7 blocks per game ranked second in the league.

His teammates surprised him by leaving the award on his chair in the locker room. Gobert said he was touched by their happiness because of how much enjoys the connection they've developed defending together.

"It's been fun to, whether we have a big lineup or small lineup, being with my four teammates on the floor and try to do anything I can to make them better," Gobert said. (AP)

No. 1 Djokovic, 13-time French champ Nadal to meet in semis

PARIS (AP)—Novak Djokovic wheeled toward his guest box in a nearly empty Court Philippe Chatrier as midnight neared and let out one yell, two yells, three, four.

Once two points from a straight-set victory and seemingly well on his way to a French Open semifinal showdown against Rafael Nadal, Djokovic had to deal with so much that went awry: consecutive unforced errors that gave away a tiebreaker; a 21 1/2-minute delay while spectators left because of a COVID-19 curfew; a face-down tumble that drew blood from his left palm.

Still, the top-seeded Djokovic held on and moved on, pulling out the quarterfinal victory against No. 9 Berrettini 6-3, 6-2, 6-7 (5), 7-5 Wednesday night.

"This match had it all: falls, crowd, break. It was a lot of intensity. I just felt under tension the entire time," Djokovic said. "The reaction (at) the end was just me liberating that tension that was building up for the entire match."

Now comes a semifinal Friday against a familiar foe in a rematch of last year's Roland Garros final, but a round earlier: Nadal, who is 105-2 in the clay-court tournament.

"We know each other well," the third-seeded Nadal said. "Everybody knows that in these kind of matches, anything can happen."

Nadal's French Open set streak ended earlier Wednesday. His pursuit of a record-breaking 21st Grand Slam title — and what would be a 14th in Paris alone — remained very much intact, however.

Nadal shrugged off dropping a set at his favorite event for the first time in two years by whipping violent forehands punctuated with fist pumps and yells of "Vamos!" en route



AP Serbia's Novak Djokovic reacts as he defeats Italy's Matteo Berrettini in a quarterfinal match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium Wednesday, June 9, 2021 in Paris.

to a 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-0 victory over 10th-seeded Diego Schwartzman.

"For anybody, it's very difficult to play against him. He's feeling very comfortable on court," Schwartzman said after falling to 1-11 against Nadal. "He's Rafa, and he's always finding the way."

Nadal reached his 14th semifinal in Paris; Djokovic his 11th. It's Djokovic's 40th trip to the final four at any major, Nadal's 35th. Nadal and Roger Federer share the men's mark of 20 Grand Slam titles; Djokovic is at 18.

The semifinal will be the superstar duo's 58th matchup, more than any other two men in the sport's professional era; Djokovic leads 29-28. But Nadal is ahead 10-6 in Slam meetings, 7-1 at the French Open.

"I'm confident. I believe I can win," Djokovic said. "Otherwise, I wouldn't be here."

The other men's semifinal

Friday is No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas vs. No. 6 Alexander Zverev.

There are four first-time Grand Slam semifinalists left in the women's bracket, something that last happened at a major during the 1978 Australian Open. On Thursday, Maria Sakkari plays Barbora Krejcikova, and Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova plays Tamara Zidansek.

Djokovic was so close to advancing when he led the third-set tiebreaker against 2019 U.S. Open semifinalist Berrettini 5-4. But after accumulating merely 14 unforced errors over about 2 1/2 hours up to then, Djokovic committed two in a row—a nervy forehand into the net, then a backhand into the net—and lost that set, drawing roars from a crowd hoping for more tennis.

The number of people allowed in the 15,000-seat main stadium was limited to 1,000 for each of the first 10 days

of the tournament because of pandemic-related restrictions, but that limit was raised to 5,000 on Wednesday. The start of play for Djokovic-Berrettini was bumped up an hour to 8 p.m., and the 9 p.m. curfew that had been in place was moved to 11 p.m.

They did the wave, added some atmosphere and kept chair umpire James Keothavong a bit busy—especially when it was time to empty the stadium.

When the curfew arrived, there were jeers and whistles and some slow movers, so Djokovic and Berrettini—who seemed particularly buoyed by the prodding he received from fans—gathered their belongings and left the court until the match could resume.

Berrettini said that when action returned, his legs felt like they were "made of marble."

"It's a shame. It's something that I don't like," he said about the delay, adding that he understood the need for special

rules during the pandemic.

Berrettini didn't play a point in the fourth round because the player he was supposed to face, Federer, withdrew with an eye to being ready for Wimbledon. In Djokovic's previous match, he dropped the first two sets against another Italian, 19-year-old Lorenzo Musetti.

Sure, Berrettini produced a trio of break points in the opening set Wednesday, but con-

verted none and never earned another such chance. But Djokovic needed to do a little extra work to finish the job.

Nadal, meanwhile, entered his quarterfinal with a 35-set run at Roland Garros that began during the 2019 final. That grew to 36, before Schwartzman outplayed him for a stretch.

"I don't pretend to come here and not (lose) sets. Is not my mindset to come here and just thinking (losing) a set is going to be a disaster for me. I mean, that's part of the game," Nadal said. "The thing that matters is how you recover from a set lost."

At a set apiece and Schwartzman up 4-3 in the third, this is how Nadal sized things up: "That was the moment to make it happen."

As if wanting something were enough to will it into existence, he won the next nine games, leaving Schwartzman muttering to himself and bouncing his racket off the clay.

Peyton Manning going into Denver Broncos Ring of Fame

ENGLEWOOD, Colo.

(AP)—Peyton Manning was elected to the Broncos Ring of Fame on Wednesday in recognition of his record-breaking four-year run in Denver that culminated with a victory in Super Bowl 50.

Manning will be honored during a game against Washington at Empower Field at Mile High on Halloween, less than three months after his induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame on Aug. 8.

"From Floyd Little to Karl Mecklenburg to Steve Atwater to many others, I've always looked up at the names around the stadium and admired the great players the Broncos have had over the years," Manning said in a statement. "I'm very humbled to now join them as a Ring of Famer."

The six-member selection committee unanimously selected Manning as the 35th member of the team's Ring of Fame. Last year's honoree, former coach Mike Shanahan, also will be honored this season after the pandemic prevented his ceremony in 2020.

Manning joins Champ Bailey (2019) as the only Broncos selected to the team's Ring of Fame and the

Pro Football Hall of Fame in the same season.

Manning's four seasons in Denver from 2012-15 "were marked by record-setting individual success and exceptional leadership that helped the Broncos to multiple Super Bowls and one of the winningest periods in team history," team CEO and President Joe Ellis said.

Manning joined the Broncos as a free agent on March 20, 2012, after his release from the Colts following a 14-year run in Indianapolis that included a win in Super Bowl 41.

At the time, his future in football was cloudy because he was coming off multiple neck fusion surgeries that left him with numbness in his throwing hand and he had missed the entire 2011 season.

He replaced Tim Tebow and took over a Broncos team that had gone 8-8 the year before his arrival and led them to two Super Bowls and one championship over the next four seasons.

Along the way, Manning won Comeback Player of the Year, his record fifth MVP award, two AP First-Team All-Pro honors and three Pro Bowl honors.

Brady's Bucs focused on getting better, repeating as champs

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—There's no room for complacency in Tom Brady's world.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers are hoping to become the first team to repeat as Super Bowl champions since Brady's 2003 and 2004 New England Patriots, and the 43-year-old quarterback doesn't want teammates taking anything for granted.

Although the Bucs will return all 22 starters after prioritizing keeping an ultra-talented roster together this offseason, Brady understands it'll take more than having familiar faces around him to win another Lombardi Trophy.

The seven-time Super Bowl winner said Wednesday that players have to resist any temptation to hold on to last

year and assume "just because you did something in February that you'll do it again next February because that's not the reality of football."

"I feel like we're not finished products. It was really our first opportunity to play together last year and there's a lot of opportunity for us to grow into something that could be very different," Brady added. "We've got to improve the things that we did well and we've got to certainly build on a lot of things that we didn't do very well."

The team will wrap up a three-day mandatory minicamp Thursday.

Coach Bruce Arians said he hasn't detected any signs of complacency.

"That's the first thing I was looking for, and I didn't see any. Our guys know how to work, so I really don't have to

say anything," Arians said.

"If it's on offense, you're probably going to get chewed out by Brady," the coach added. "If you're on defense, Lavonte (David) is probably chewing you out."

Nevertheless, Brady credits Arians with setting the tone for continued growth by stressing last year's team won the Super Bowl but this year's squad hasn't done anything.

"I think he's really got the sense of urgency, too," Brady said, noting Arians also won multiple titles as an assistant coach and knows what defending champions go through.

"And I think if there's one thing we all know about him is he shoots us straight all the time. He doesn't sugarcoat a lot," the quarterback added. "What he thinks is what he says. That's all you can ask

for as a player. I think we all respect that."

Brady also briefly discussed his surgically repaired left knee, saying the procedure performed 15 weeks ago went well. He began throwing three weeks ago and has participated in individual and team drills during minicamp.

"Every player deals with different things. I never like to talk about injuries. I'm a little bit old school in that way," said Brady, who did not provide any details about the injury, which he said had been bothering him since last offseason.

"I knew I would have to do something at the end of the year ... and there was a great outcome," Brady said. "I'm very happy about that. I feel I will be able to do some different things than I was able to do last year."

Pederson, Arrieta lead Cubs to 3-1 win over Darvish, Padres

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Joc Pederson of the Chicago Cubs hit a towering, game-tying home run off San Diego ace Yu Darvish and, as he approached third base on his trot, mimicked the stutter step Padres star Fernando Tatis Jr. does after he homers. If Tatis can have fun, so can he, Pederson figured.

"I see Tatis, he has a lot of homers, he's done it, he's having fun out there," Pederson said after the Cubs beat former teammate Darvish and the Padres 3-1 on Wednesday. "He's got some of the most swag in the game. Our team's just having fun."

Phillies 2, Braves 1

In Philadelphia, Luke Williams walked Philadelphia off with his first big league homer, hitting a two-run shot with two outs in the ninth inning to beat Atlanta. The Phillies had just four hits and made 15 straight outs before Andrew McCutchen drew a one-out walk off Will Smith (1-5) in the ninth.

Reds 7, Brewers 3

In Cincinnati, Vladimir Gutierrez pitched seven effective innings, Tyler Stephenson drove in three runs and Cin-

cinnati stopped Milwaukee's five-game win streak.

Rockies 4, Marlins 3

In Miami, Raimel Tapia hit two doubles, singled and scored twice, and Colorado earned a rare road victory over Miami, handing Bud Black his 300th win as Rockies manager.

Dodgers 2, Pirates 1

In Pittsburgh, Justin Turner hit two home runs and Los Angeles got 7 1/3 scoreless innings from its bullpen in a victory over Pittsburgh in a game delayed 70 minutes at the start due to rain.

Blue Jays 6, White Sox 2

In Chicago, Randal Grichuk hit a long home run and Toronto took advantage of a season-high four errors by Chicago as well as a bases-loaded walk to beat the AL Central-leading White Sox.

Grichuk hit a 451-foot drive leading off the second inning. Toronto rookie Alek Manoah threw five solid innings in his third major league start and the Blue Jays won despite another strong start by Chicago's Lance Lynn.

Angels 6, Royals 1

In Anaheim, Griffin Canning pitched five-hit ball into the seventh inning, Anthony Rendon hit a two-run double and Los Angeles swept Kansas City.

Kean Wong had a two-run single, and José Iglesias added an RBI double for the Angels, who have won eight of 11 after completing a 5-2 homestand and outscoring Kansas City 22-5 in the three-game sweep.

Mariners 9, Tigers 6 (11 innings)

In Detroit, Jake Fraley made a game-saving catch in the ninth inning, then drove in the go-ahead run in the 11th to lead Seattle over Detroit.

Nationals 9, Rays 7 (11 innings)

In St. Petersburg, Starlin Castro drove in a run with a double during a two-run 11th inning and Washington beat AL East-leading Tampa Bay.

Castro opened the 11th with his hit against Diego Castillo (2-3) and came home on a sacrifice fly by Josh Harrison to make it 9-7.

Tanner Rainey had runners on first and second with no outs

in the bottom of the inning and escaped for his first save.

Athletics 4, Diamondbacks 0

In Oakland, Sean Manaea pitched six innings of two-hit ball, and Oakland handed Arizona its 19th straight road loss, the longest such streak in major league baseball since 1985..

Mark Canha had two hits and two RBIs for Oakland, and Jed Lowrie finished with three hits. The AL West leaders won for the sixth time in seven games.

Rangers 4, Giants 3 (11 innings)

In Arlington, Brock Holt hit a game-ending single with two outs in the 11th inning and Texas beat San Francisco for its second win in 14 games.

Holt lined a single to center off lefty Jake McGee (2-2) after the Giants intentionally walked leadoff hitter Isiah Kiner-Falefa to get to the left-handed hitter.

Cardinals 8, Indians 2

In St. Louis, Adam Wainwright allowed two runs in seven innings, Tyler O'Neill

homered twice, and St. Louis snapped a six-game losing streak with a win over Cleveland.

O'Neill hit a 451-foot, two-run homer in the third off Phil Maton and a solo homer in the seventh against Trevor Stephan.

Astros 8, Red Sox 3

In Boston Jose Altuve and Alex Bregman homered to help Jake Odorizzi pick up his first win since 2019, and Houston rolled past Boston 8-3 on Wednesday night.

Houston has won three straight and will look to sweep the series in Thursday's finale. Boston led 2-0 early, but the Astros responded with five quick runs to take control.

Mets 14, Orioles 1

In Baltimore, Kevin Pillar and Billy McKinney each hom-

ered twice, and the Mets beat Matt Harvey decisively for the second time this season, routing the Baltimore Orioles 14-1 on Wednesday night. New York has been beset by injuries — and newly acquired star Francisco Lindor has had his struggles — but the Mets extended their lead in the NL East to 3 1/2 games over second-place Atlanta.

Yankees 9, Twins 6

In Minneapolis, Gerrit Cole put his familiar spin on a tenacious win. The New York Yankees usually find their groove in Minnesota, after all.

Cole got back on track with six sharp innings amid the hubbub around grip aids for pitchers, and Giancarlo Stanton hit two of New York's four home runs to fuel a 9-6 victory Wednesday night over the Twins.

NMIFA to host referee course this weekend

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Mariana Islands Football Association in conjunction with the Referee Committee will conduct a basic referee course Saturday, June 12, 2021, starting at 9am at the NMI Soccer Training Center.

The course, which will be open for ages 14 years old and above, will be held from



U18 B. NMI U18 A's Atoy Angeles and Kohtaro Kado-kura led the way to victory with one goal apiece.

Old B Bank managed to edge out Kanoa FC by a 3-2 victory behind Albert Bergancia, Rex De Jose, and Kosuke Sato.

It was a close match between the two with Bergancia taking the lead for Old B Bank in the 26th minute.

Kanoa's Andruw Omelau brought the game to tie in the 37th minute with his first goal before Old B Bank regained the lead in the 62nd minute behind De Jose.

Omelau, again, brought the game to a draw in the 63rd

minute, 2-2, but a final goal from Sato secured the win for Old B Bank in the 73rd minute.

FIVE

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Allan Relativo, Nap Balingit, Puy Macario, David Li, Dez, Leng Peraja, Miles Guerrero, Pat Surima, Sun Young Kim, Hiroko, Hannah Santos, and Annetta Ta.

Team Taga members include Dan Macario, Allan Lee, Hapi Gabriel, Kevin Barros, Rommel Monserat, Ian Lubao, Hannah Choi, Mika Serrano, Merlie Tolentino, Monique Macaranas, Nicole

Macaranas, Kazuko Sondheim, Thomas Lim, and Joseph Torres.

Making up team Shirely's are Andreu Galvez, Lance Galardo, Walker, Jerry Tan, Leonard Manuel, Windy Fernandez, Loida Ito, Rowena Shouck, Irish Pagarao, Roxel Lazaro, Jadel Ignacio, Gladys Dacumos, Joseph King, and Perry Lei.

TanHoldings Badminton Team Tournament is being conducted by the Northern Mariana Islands Badminton Association.

Rotaract Family Sports Fiesta, Summer Shoot-out this Saturday

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Rotaract Club of Saipan is hosting a Family Sports Fiesta and Rotaract Summer Shoot-out at the Kagman Community Center this Saturday, June 12. Family Sports Fiesta begins at 9am and warmups for the basketball competitions begins at 10am. The Summer Shoot-out itself will begin at 10:30am.

The Family Sports Fiesta will feature stations where the community can try out different sports, including but not limited to mini-basketball, table tennis, soccer, and badminton, and games like corn-hole and bocce.

As shared by current Rotaract president Keoni Hosono and director of Club Service

and incoming president Richard Baleares, the club's current plan is to give children who attend the event a "passport" that gets stamped every time they try out a different sport. Once the passport is fully stamped, they can turn in the passport for a chance at prizes while supplies last.

The Summer Shoot-out will feature "The Free-Throw Competition," "The Around-the-World Challenge," and "The Half-Court Bomber Challenge." All of the events will have three age divisions: U16, U20, and U100.

For the Free-Throw-Competition, competitors will be given 1 minute to make as many shots from behind the free-throw line as they can, with one made shot equaling

1 point. Highest scorer in each of the three age divisions wins, and ties will be decided with a 30-second sudden-death round until the tie is broken.

For the Around-the-World Challenge, competitors must make a basket from marked points along the 3-point arc. The person to score a basket from all of the marked points the quickest will be the challenge's champion.

For the Half-Court Bomber Challenge, each participant will be given three chances to make a basket from the half-court line. The challenge will serve as an intermission after three or four rounds of the Free-Throw Competition.

Hosono wishes for a good turnout at the Family Sports Fi-

esta. "I'm really hoping to get families to come out and play together. The Family Sports Fiesta is an opportunity for parents or siblings to have fun with their children or younger siblings," said Hosono.

Baleares says that the dual event on Saturday will help fund the Rotaract's future endeavors, and thanks those who helped make the events possible. "I'm hoping to get a pretty good turnout for this Saturday! The proceeds of this fundraiser goes to the Rotaract Club of Saipan's service projects, and I'm hoping we can get more things done after this project. I would like to thank the Rotary Club of Saipan, [Rotarian] Greg Borja, [the Division of Youth Services], and all of our generous sponsors," said Baleares.

We still have about a month a half away from making the first cut but judging from the turnout, we'll be lacking height and experience but in return we'll be getting speed and energy which will likely determine the style of game and system to instill with the teams," Rangamar said.

The NMIBF, under the leadership of former national player James Lee, designed the national program to provide the islands a steady and deep pool of players that would suit up for the Commonwealth in several competitions, not just for next year's Micronesian Games.

"This great turnout is definitely a good start for the tryouts and we would like to invite other players and coaches to be part in the development of our national program," the NMIBF president added.

For this season, the pro-



Chris Paul has another big night, Suns rout Nuggets

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Saipan Tribune Sports

No. 1 Djokovic, 13-time French champ Nadal to meet in semis

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

TanHoldings, MPU vie for championship

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With just one game left in the season, TanHoldings and MP United will vie for the championship in Division A of the M-League Spring 2021 this weekend at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Promising turnout for NMI national basketball program



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Volunteer coach John Santos instructs players to work by age groups during the Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation's national program tryouts last Tuesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Young guns led the more than 60 players that showed up for the kick-off of Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation's national program tryouts last Tuesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.



coming out to play," the 16-year-old said.

The men's division also had a lot of youth ballers, making veteran player Preston Basa excited about the future of the program.

"It is great to see many of our younger athletes come out as they are the future of our program and I am excited to be able to work alongside them throughout the process," said Basa after joining the first day of the tryout.

The women's division tryouts drew players as young as 9 years old, while majority of the participants are high school students and together they worked on drills with former CNMI National Team members.

Fiona Bucalig of the Lady Rollers was among the young players trying out for the program and said she looks forward to learning a lot from veteran coaches and players and getting to the level that would allow her to potentially represent the CNMI in future competitions.

"Being on the younger side and trying out for the women's national was of course nerve wracking, but all the coaches were super welcoming. It was great to see such a big group of girls

See PROMISING on Page 23



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TanHoldings' Jacob Montes-Sabino pushes past a The One defender during their match last Sunday in Division A of the M-League Spring 2021 held at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Following last weekend's set of games, TanHoldings, who took a 7-1 victory over The One, has a 1-win advantage over MP United with a win-loss record of 10-2 with 1 draw.

MP United, after taking 5-1 victory over Paire FC, closely trails TanHoldings with a win-loss record of 9-2 with 2 draws.

In the final and determining match this coming weekend, MP United's championship title is riding on them taking the win over Kanoa FC.



TanHoldings, on the other hand, needs only a draw against Old B Bank to take home the championship title of this year's M-League season.

Despite two off games in a row, TanHoldings bounced back last Sunday, proving why they remain the team to beat after a 7-1 victory over The One.

Mark Esalan carried the team to victory by scoring 4 of the team's winning goals, with help from Joshua Mendez, Ryu-to Yanai, and Mareko Tekopua

who landed one goal each.

Esalan took the lead for his team early on in the match, landing his first goal in the fourth minute. Mendez made his goal soon after in the 15th minute. Esalan later came back for another goal in the 18th minute.

See MPU on Page 23

Five to compete in Badminton Team tourney



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Five teams are set to vie for the championship title in the upcoming TanHoldings Badminton Team Tournament this weekend.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Five teams are set to compete for the championship in the 2021 TanHoldings Badminton Team Tournament this weekend.

The teams that will go head to head this weekend are the

Community Badminton Club CBC, United Badminton Club UBC, Golden Racquets, Taga Badminton Club, and Shirley's Badminton Club.



Jack Chow, William Liang, Malou Malasarte, Ella Serano, Lani Santos, Arriane Antonio, Yoko Borja, Bong Robles, Kaye Shiro, and Gigi Zapanta.

In UBC, the members include Ezekiel Macario, Janelle Pangilinan, John Oh, Gary

Bandoja, Leo Xu, Paul Xiong, Lee Yong Soo, Henry Quian, Elna Curate, Lucelle Lampera, Min Hee Oh, Christy Villaflor, April Rio, and Ericka Santiago.

The Golden Racquets are Jordan Pangilinan, Alex Nguyen,

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